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# THE TRAGEDY OF NERO.

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*Newly written.*

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THE

THE TRAGEDY  
OF  
MERO

London

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# THE TRAGEDIE OF NERO.

*Actus Primus.*

Enter *Petronius, Arbyter, Antonius, Honoratus.*

*Petronius.*

**P**ish, take the Wench  
I showed thee now, or else some other seeke ;  
What can your choller no way be allay'd ?  
But with Imperiall titles ?

Will you more titles unto *Cesar* give ?

*Anto.* Great are thy fortunes *Nero*, great thy power,  
Thy Empire limited with natures bounds ;  
Vpon thy ground the Sunne doth set, and rise ;  
The day, and night are thine :  
Nor can the Planets wander where they will :  
See that proud Earth, that feares not *Cesars* name,  
Yet nothing of all this, I envie thee ;  
But her, to whom the World, unforc't, obayes,  
Whose eyes more worth then all it lookest upon :  
In whom, all beauties Nature hath enclof'd,  
That through the wide Earth, or Heaven are dispos'd.

*Petro.* Indeed she, steals and robs each part o'th world,  
With borrowed beauties to enflame thine eye ;  
The Sea, to fetch her Pearle, is div'd into,  
The Diamond rocks are cut, to make her shine :

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

To plume her pride, the Birds doe naked sing  
When my *Emperour*, in a homely gowne.

*Ans.* Homely I saith.

*Petru.* I, homely in her gowne,  
But looke upon her face, and that's set out  
With no small grace, no vayled shaddowes helpe;  
Foole; that hadst rather with false lights and darke  
Beguiled be, then see the ware thou buyest?

*Poppea* royally attended, and passe over the  
Stage, in State.

*Ans.* Great Queene, whom nature made to be her glory,  
Fortune got eyes, and came to be thy servant,  
Honour is proud to be thy tides; Though  
Thy beauties doe draw up my soule; yet still,  
So bright, so glorious is thy Majestie,  
That it beates downe againe my climbing thoughts.

*Petru.* Why true;  
And other of thy blindneses thou seest,  
Such one to love thou dar'st not speake unto.  
Give me a wench, that will be easily had,  
Not wold vwith cost; And, being sent for, comes,  
And when I have her folded in mine armes,  
Then *Cleopatra* she, or *Lucre* is:  
Ile give her any title.

*Ans.* Yet not so much her greatness and estate  
My hopes dishearten, as her chastitie.

*Pet.* Chastitie, foole! a vword not knowne in Courts:  
Well may it lodge in meane, and Country homes,  
Where pouerty, and labour keepe them downe,  
Short sleepes, and hands made hard with *Tuscan* Wooll.  
But never comes to great mens Pallaces,  
Where ease, and riches, stirring thoughtes beget,  
Provoking meats, and surfeit wines inflame:  
Where all there setting forth's but to be woed,  
And woed they would not be, but to be woe.  
Will one man serve *Poppea*? Nay thou shalt  
Make her, as soone contented with an eye.

*Nimph.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Nimphidius* to them.

*Nim.* Whilke *Nero*, in the streets his Pageants shewes,  
I, to his faire wives chamber sent for me.

You gracious Starres that smil'd in my birth,  
And thou bright starre more powerfull then them all,  
Whose favouring smiles have made me what I am,  
Thou shalt my God, my Fate, and fortune be.

*Exit Nim.*

*Ant.* How saweely you fellow.  
Enters the Empresse chamber.

*Pet.* I, and her too? *Antonina* knowest thou him?

*Ant.* What? know the onely favorite of the Court?  
Indeed, not many dayes agoe thou mightest  
Have not unlawfully asked that question.

*Pet.* Why? is he rais'd?  
*Ant.* That have I sought in him,  
But never piece of good desert could find:  
He is *Nimphidius*'s sonne, the free'd woman,  
Which basenesse to shake off, he nothing hath  
But his owne pride.

*Pet.* You remember, when *Gallus*, *Celsus*,  
And others too, though now forgotten, were  
Great in *Poppaea* eyes.

*Ant.* I doe, and did interpret it in them:  
An honourable favour, she bare vertue,  
Or parts like vertue.

*Pet.* The cause is one of theirs, and this mans grace,  
I once was great in wavering smiles of Court,  
I fell because I knew: Since have I given  
My time to my owne pleasures, and would now  
Advise thee too, to meane and lase delights:  
The thigh's as soft the sheepes backe coveresh,  
As that with crimson, and with gold adorn'd:  
Yet cause I see, that thy restrain'd desires,  
Cannot their owne way chuse, come thou with me,  
Perhaps Ie shew thee meanes of remedie.

*Exaudi.*

*Tuo*

The Tragedie of Nero.

Two Romans at severall doores,

1. Rom. Whither so fast man? whither so fast?  
2. Rom. Whither? but where your cares doe lead you;  
To *Neros* Triumphs, and the shouts you heare.  
1. Rom. Why? comes he crown'd with *Parbrian* ouerthrow,  
And brings he *Vologasus* with him chain'd?  
2. Rom. *Parbrian* overthrow? why, he comes crown'd  
For Victories which never Roman wonne;  
For having *Greece* in her owne arts overthowne;  
In Singing, Dancing, Horse-race, Stage-playing.  
Never, O *Rome* had never such a Prince.  
1. Rom. Yet I have heard: our ancestors were crown'd  
For other Victories,  
2. Rom. None of our ancestors, were ere like him. *Within*  
*Nero, Apollo, Nero, Hercules!*  
1. Rom. Hearke, how th'applauding shouts do cleare th'ayre,  
This Idle talke will make me loose the fight.

Two Romanes more to them.

3 Rom. Whither goe you? alls done i'th Capitall,  
And *Nero*, having there his tables hang,  
And garlands up, is to the Pallace gone.  
'Twas beyond wonder; I shall never see,  
Nay, I never looke to see the like againe,  
Eighteene hundred and eight Crownes  
For severall victories and the place set downe  
Where, and in what, and whom he overcame.  
4 Rom. That was set downe i'th tables, that were borne  
Upon the Souldiers speares.  
1 Rom. O made, and sometimes vs'd to other ends!  
3 Rom. But did he winne them all with singing?  
3 Rom. Faith all with singing, and with Stage-playing!  
1 Rom. So many Crownes got with a song!  
4 Rom. But, did you marke the Greeke Musicians  
Behind his Chariot, hanging downe their heads?

Sham'd

The Tragedie of Nero.

Sham'd, and overcome in their protestions,  
O Rome was never honour'd so before.

3. Rom. But, what was he that rode ith' Chariot with him?

4. Rom. That was *Diodorus* the Minstrell, that he favours.

3. Rom. Was there ever such a Prince?

2. Rom. O Nero *Augustus*, the true *Augustus*.

3. Rom. Nay, had you seen him as he rode along,  
With an *Olympicke* Crowne upon his head,  
And with a *Psibian* on his arme; you would have thought,  
Looking on one, he had *Apollo* seem'd,  
On th' other *Hercules*.

2. Rom. I have heard my father oft repeat the Triumphs,  
Which in *Augustus* *Casars* times were showne,  
Vpon his Victorie ore the *Illyrians*,  
But it seemes it was not like to this.

3. & 4. Rom. Push, it could not be like this.

2. 3. & 4. O Nero, *Apollo*, *Nero*, *Hercules*.

Exeunt. 3. 3. & 4. Rom.

*Manet Primus.*

1. Rom. Whether *Augustus* Triumph greater was  
I cannot tell; his Triumphs cause I know  
Was greater farre, and farre more honourable.  
What are we People? or our flattering voices,  
That alwayes shame, and foolish things applaud  
Having no sparke of soule; All ears and eyes,  
Pleas'd with vaine shewes, deluded by our senses,  
Still enemis to wisedome, and to goodnessie.

Enter *Nero*, *Poppea*, *Nimbidius*, *Tigellinus*, *Eapro-*  
*ditus*, *Neophytus*, and others.

*Nero*. Now faire *Poppea*, see thy *Nero* shine  
In bright *Achæas* spoyles, and *Rome* in him.  
The *Capitol* hath other Trophies seen  
Then it was wont; Not spoyles with blood bedu'd,  
Or the unhappy obsequies of Death:  
But such is *Casars* cunning, not his force,  
Hath wrung from *Greec*; too bragging of her art.

*Tigell.* And in this strife, the glories all your owne,  
Your Tribunes cannot share this praise with you;

B.

Here.

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Here your *Centurions* have no part at all,  
Bootlesse your Armies, and your Eagles were ;  
No Navies helpe, to bring away this conquest.

*Nim.* Even Fortunes selfe, Fortune the *Queen* of Kingdoms  
(That Wars grim valour graceth with her deeds,) Will claime no portion in this Victory.

*Nero.* Not *Bacchus*, drawne from Niſa downe with Tigers,  
Curbing with viny raines, their vvilfull heads,  
Whilſt ſome doe gape upon his Iuy Thirſe,  
Some, on the dangling grapes, that Crowne his head,  
All prayſe his beautie, and continuing youth ;  
So strooke, amazed India with wonder  
As *Neroes* glories did the Greekiſh Townes  
*Eli* and *Pifa*, and the rich *Micenea*,  
*Iunianian Argos*, and yet *Corinthe* proud  
Of her two Seas ; all which ore-come, did yeeld  
To me their praise, and prises of their games.

*Poppea.* Yet, in your Greekiſh journey, we doe heare  
*Sparta*, and *Athens*, the two eyes of *Greece*  
Neither beheld your person, nor your ſkill ;  
Whether, because they did afford no games,  
Or for their too much gravitie.

*Nero.* Why ? what  
Should I have ſene in them ? but in the one,  
Hunger, blacke pottage, and men hot to die,  
Thereby to rid themſelves of miſery :  
And what in th' other ? but ſhort Capes, long Beards,  
Much wrangling, in things needless to be knowne,  
Wifdom in words, and only auſtere faces.  
I vwill not be *Aiecelans*, nor *Solon*.

*Nero* was there, where he might honour vvinne,  
And honour hath he won, and brought from *Greece*,  
Thofe ſpoiles which never Roman could obtaine,  
Spyoles won by wit, and *Trophyes* of his ſkill.

*Nim.* What a thing he makes it to be a Minſtril .

*Pop.* I prayſe your wit, my Lord, that chose ſuch ſafe  
Honors, ſafe ſpoiles, won without duff or blood.

*Nero.* What mocke ye me *Poppea* ?

*Poppea.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Poppea.* Nay, in good faith my Lord, I speake in earnest,  
I hate that he die, and adventurous crew,  
That goe to loose their owne, to purchase, but  
The breath of others, and the common voyce,  
Them that will lose their hearing for a sound ;  
That by death onely, seek to get a living,  
Make skarres their beauty, and count losse of Limmes  
The commendation of a proper man,  
And so, goe halting to immortalitie :  
Such fooles I love worse then they doe their lives.

*Nero.* But now *Poppea* having layd apart  
Our boastfull spoyles, and ornaments of Triumph. ;  
Come we like *Inno* from *Phlegra* —

*Poppea.* O Gyant-like comparilon.

*Nero.* When after all his Fiers and wandring darts,  
He comes to bath himselfe in *Inno* Eyes :  
But thou, (then wrangling *Inno*) farre increaſe,  
Stayning the evening beautie of the Skie,  
Or the dayes brightnesse ; ſhalt make glad thy *Cesar*,  
Shalt make him proud ſuch beauties to Inioy : *Excessus.*

*Manet Nimphe diuina solus.*

*Nimphi.* Such beauties to injoy, were happincſe,  
And a reward ſufficient in it ſelfe,  
Although no other end, or hopes were aim'd at :  
But I have other ; Tis not *Poppeas* armes,  
Nor the ſhort pleaſures of a wanton bed,  
That can extinguiſh mine aſpiring thirſt  
To *Neroes* Crowne ; by her love I muſt climbe,  
Her bed is but a ſtep unto his Throne ;  
Already, wiſe men laugh at him, and hate him ;  
The people, though his Minſtreſſe doth pleaſe them  
They feare his Crueltie, hate his exactions,  
Which, his need, ſtill, muſt force him to encrease.  
The multitude, which cannot one thing long  
Like, or diſlike, being cloy'd with vanitie,  
Will hate their owne delights, though Wiſedome doe hor,  
Even wearineſſe, at length, will give them eyes,

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Thus I by *Neroes* and *Poppaeas* favour,  
Rais'd to the envious height of second place,  
May gaine the first : Hate must strike *Nero* downe,  
Love make *Nimphidius* way unto a Crowne.

*Exit,*

*Enter Seneca, Scenarius, Lucan, and Flaminus.*

*Scen.* His first beginning was his fathers death,  
His brothers poysoning, and wives bloody end  
Came next, his mothers murder clos'd up all :

X Yet hitherto he was but wicked, when  
The guilt of greater evills, tooke away the shame  
Of lesser, and did headlong thrust him forth,  
To be the scorne, and laughter to the World ;  
Then first an Emperour came upon the Stage,  
And sung to please *Carmen*, and Candle-sellers,  
And learnt to act, to dance, to be a Fencer,  
And in despight o'th Majestie of Princes,  
He fell to wraffling, and was soyl'd with dust,  
And tumbled on the Earth with servile hands.

*Seneca.* He sometimes trayned was in better studies,  
And had a Child-hood promis'd other hopes ;  
High fortunes, like strong winds do trie their vessels.  
Was not the Race, and Theater bigge enough,  
To have inclos'd thy follies here at home ?  
O could not *Rome* and *Italie* containe  
Thy shame ? but thou must crosse the Seas to shew it ?

*Scen.* And make them that had wont to see our Consuls,  
With conquering Eagles waving in the field ;  
Instead of that, behold an Emperor dancing,  
Playing oth' stage, and what else, but to name  
Were infamie.

X *Lucan.* O *Mummius*, O *Flaminus* ;  
You, whom your Vertues have not made more famous  
Then *Neroes* vices ; You went o're to *Greece*,  
But t' other vvarres, and brought home other conquests.  
You Corinth, and *Micene* overthrew ;  
And *Perses* selfe, the great *Achilles* race  
Orcame ; having *Minervas* stayned Temples.

And

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

And your slaine ancestors of Troy reveng'd.

*Senec.* They stroue with Kings, and kinglike adversaries,  
Were even in their enemies made happie ;  
The Macedonian Courage tryed of old,  
And the new greatnesse of the *Syrian* power :  
But he for *Philip*, and *Antiochus*,  
Hath found more easie enemies to deal with,  
*Turpines*, *Pammenes*, and a rout of Fidlers.

*Scenin.* Why all the begging Mynstrills by the way,  
He tooke along with him, and fore'd to strive  
That he might overcome imagining  
Himselfe immortall by such victories.

*Flavi.* The men he carried over were enough  
T'have put the *Parthian* to his second flight  
Or the proud Indian, taught the Roman yoke.

*Scenin :* But they were *Neroes* men, like *Nero* arm'd  
With Lutes, and Harps, and Pipes, and Fiddle-cases ;  
Souldiers to'th shadow train'd, and not the field. (worthy.

*Flani.* Therefore they brought spoyles of such Souldiers  
*Lucan.* But to throw downe the walles and gates of Rome,  
To make an entrance for an *Hebby-horse* ;  
To vaunt to'th people his ridiculous spoyles ;  
To come with Lawrell, and with Olives crown'd,  
For having beene the worst of all the Singers,  
Is beyond Patience.

*Scenin.* I and anger too,  
Had you but seene him in his Chariot ride.  
That Chariot in which *Augustus* late  
His Triumphs ore so many Nations shew'd,  
And with him in the same a Minstrell plac'd,  
The whil'st the people running by his side,  
*Hayle thou Olympick Conquerour* did cry,  
*O baste thou Pithian*, and did fill the skie  
With shame, and voices, Heaven would not have heard :  
*Senec.* I saw't, but turn'd away my Eyes, and Eares,  
Angry, they should be privie to such fights.  
Why doe I stand relating of the story,  
Which in the doing had enough to grieve me ?

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Tell on, and end the tale, you, whom it pleaseth ;  
Mee mine owne sorrovv stops from farther speaking,  
Nero, my love doth make thy fault, and my grieve greater.

*Scenin.* I doe command in *Seneca* this passion ; (ex. *Sen.*)  
And yet me thinkes our Countries miserie,  
Doth at our hands crave somewhat more then teares,  
*Luca.* Pittie, thought dotha kind affection shew,  
(If it end there) our weakenesse makes us know.

*Flavi.* Let children weepe, and men seeke remedie.

*Scen.* Stoutly, and like a Souldier, *Flanius* :  
Yet to seeke remedy to a Princes ill,  
Seldome, but it doth the Phisitian kill.

*Flani.* And if it doe *Sceninus*, it shall take  
But a devoted soule from *Flanius*,  
W hich, to my Country, and the Gods of *Rome*,  
Already sacred is, and given away,  
Death is no stranger unto me, I haue  
The doubtfull hazard in tvvelue battailes throwne,  
My chance was life.

*Luca.* Why doe we goe to fight in Britanie ?  
And end our lives under another Sunne ?  
Seeke causelesse dangers out ? the Germane might  
Enjoy his Woods, and his ov vne Allis drinke,  
Yet we vvalke safely in the streets of Rome :  
*Bodinca* hinders not, but we might live,  
Whom, we doe hurt ; Them we call enemies,  
And those our Lords that spoyle, and murder us.

*Scenin.* Nothing is hard to them that dare to die.  
This Noble resolution in you Lords,  
Heartens me to disclose some thoughts that I—  
The matter is of waight and dangerous.

*Luca.* I see you feare us *Sceninus*.

*Scen.* Nay, nay, although the thing be full of feare.

*Flani.* Tell it to faithfull Eares, what ere it bee.

*Scenin.* Faith let it goe, it will but trouble us,  
Bee hurtfull to the speaker, and the hearer.

*Luca.* If our long friendship, or the opinion.

*Scenin.* Why should I feare to tell them ?

Why

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Why is he not a Parricide, a Player ?  
Nay *Lucan* is he not thine Enemie ?  
Hate not the Heavens, as well, as men, to see  
That condemn'd head : and yor O righteous Gods  
Whither so ere you now are fled, and will  
No more looke downe upon th' oppressed Earth ;  
O severe anger of the highest Gods,  
And thou sterne power, to whom the Greeks assigne  
Scourges, and (words to punish proud mens wrongs),  
If you be more then names found out to awe us,  
And that wee doe not vainely build you altars,  
Aid that just arme, that's bent to execute  
What you should doe.

*Lucan.* Stay, y'are carried too much avvay *Scenius*.

*Scenius.* Why, what will you say for him ? hath he not  
Sought to supprese your Poem, to bereaue  
That honour every tongue in duty paid it.  
Nay, what can you say for him, hath he not  
Broache his owne wiues (a chaste wives) breast, and torn  
With *Scishian* hands his Mothers bowels up,  
The Inhospitable *Caucasus* is smilde :  
The More, that, in the boylng desert, seekes  
With blood of strangers to imbrue his jawes  
Vpbraides the Roman, now with barbarousnesse.

*Lucan.* You are too earnest,  
I neither can, nor will I speake for him :  
And, though he sought my learned paynes to wrong,  
I hate him not for that. My verse shall live  
When *Neroes* body shall be throwne in Tiber,  
And times to come shall blesse those wicked armes ;  
I love th'unnaturall wounds, from whence did flow  
Another *Ciria*, a new *Helicon*.  
I hate him that he is *Romes* enemie,  
An enemie to vertus ; sits on high  
To shame the seate ; And in that hate my life,  
And blood, Ile smingle on the earth with yours.

*Flavi.* My deeds *Scenius* shall speake my consent.

*Scen.* Tis answerd, as I looke for, Noble Poet,

Worthy

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Worthy the double Lawrell; *Flavins*,  
Good lucke I see, doth vertuous meanings ayde,  
And therefore have the Heavens forborne their duties,  
To grace our swords with glorious blood of Tyrants.

*Exeunt.*

*Finis Actus Primi.*

*Enter Petronius Solus.*

*Actus Secundus.*

*Enter Petronius Solus.*

**H**ere waites *Poppea* her *Nimphidius* comming,  
And hath this garden, and these walles chose out,  
To blesse her with more pleasures then their owne :  
Not onely Arras hangings, and silke beds  
Are guilty of the faults we blame them for  
Somewhat these Arbors, and you trees do know,  
Whil'st your kind shades, you to these night sports show.  
Night sports? Faith, they are done in open day,  
And the Sunne see'th, and caviteth their play.  
Hither have I Love-sick *Ansonius* brought,  
And thrust him on occasion so long sought :  
Shewed him the Empresse in a thicket by,  
Her loves approach waiting with greedie eye ;  
And told him, if he ever meant to prone,  
The doubtfull issue of his hopeless Love ;  
This is the place, and time wherein to try it,  
Women will heare the suite, that will deny it.  
The suit's not hard, that she comes for to take ;  
Who (hot in lust of men) doth difference make ?  
At last, loath, willing, to her did he pace ;  
Arme him *Priapus*, with thy powerfull Mace.  
But see, they comming are ; how they agree  
Here will I hearken, shrowd me gentle tree.

*Enter Poppea and Ansonius.*

X *Anso.* Seeke not to grieve that heart which is thine owne,

*In.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

In Loves sweete fires, let heate of rage burne out ;  
These browes could never yet to wrinkle learne,  
Nor anger out of such faire eyes proceed.

*Poppea.* You may solicite your presumptuous suits ;  
You dutie may, and shame too layd aside,  
Disturbe my privacies, and I forsooth,  
Must be afeard even to be angry at you.

*Anto.* What shame is't to be mastred by such beauty ?  
Who, but to serve you, comes, how wants he dutie ?  
Or if it be a shame, the shame is yours ;  
The fasalt is onely in your eyes, they drew me ;  
Cause you were lovely, therefore did I love :  
O, if to love you, anger you so much,  
You should not haue such cheeke, nor lips to touch,  
You should not have your snow, nor currall spi'd :  
If you but looke on us, in vaine you chide,  
We must not see your face, nor heare your speech :  
Now, whilst you Love forbid, you Love doe teach.

*Pet.* He doth better then I thought he would.

*Pop.* I will not learne my beauties worth of you,  
I know you neither are the first nor greatest  
Whom it hath mov'd : He whom the World obeyes  
Is fear'd with anger of my threatning Eyes.  
It is for you afarre off to adore it,  
And not to reach at it with sawsie hands.  
Feare, is the Love that's due to Gods and Princes.

*Pet.* All this is but to edge his appetite.

*Ani.* O doe not see thy faire in that false glasse  
Of outward difference ; Looke into my heart,  
There, shalt thou see thy selfe, Inthroned set  
In greater Majestie, then all the Pompe  
Of *Rome*, or *Nero* ; Tis not the crowching awe,  
And Ceremony, with which we flatter Princes,  
That can to Loves true duties be compar'd.

*Pop.* Sir, let me goe, or Ile make knowne your Loue  
To them, that shall require it, but with hate.

*Pet.* On, on, thou hast the goale, the fort is beaten,  
Women are won when they begin to threaten.

C

*Ani.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Anto.* Your Noblenesse doth warrant me for that,  
Nor need you others helpe to punish me,  
Who by your forehead am condemn'd or free.  
They, that to be reveng'd do bend their mind,  
Seeke alwayes recompence, in that same kind  
The wrong was done them; Love was mine offence,  
In that revenge, in that seeke recompence.

*Popp.* Further to answere, will still cause replies,  
And those as ill doe please me, as your selfe:  
If you're an answere take, that's briefe and true,  
I hate my selfe, if I be lov'd of you.

*exit Popp.*

*Petro.* What gone? but she will come againe sure, no;  
It passeth cleane my cunning, all my rules;  
For Womens vantonnesse there is no rule,  
To take her in the itching of her Lust,  
A proper yong man putting foorth himselfe?  
Why Fate; There's Fate and hidden providence  
In codpiece matters.

*Anto.* O unhappy Man,  
What comfort have I now *Petronius*?

*Pet.* Counsell your selfe, Ile teach no more but learne.  
*Ant.* This comfort yet; he shall not so escape,  
Who causeth my disgrace, *Nimphidius*,  
Whom had I here.—Well, for my true hearts loue  
I see shee hates me; And shall I love one  
That hates me; and bestowes what I deserue  
Upon my riviall? no, Farewell *Poppea*,  
Farewell *Poppea*, and farewell all Love;  
Yet thus much shall it still preuale in me,  
That I will hate *Nimphidius* for thee.

*Pet.* Farewell to her, to my *Enanthe* welcome,  
Who, now, will to my burning kisses stoope,  
Now, with an easie crueltie denie,  
That, which she, rather then the asker, would  
Have forced from her, then begins her selfe.  
There loves, that list, upon great Ladies set;  
I still will love the Wench that I can get.

*Exeunt.*  
*Enter*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Nero, Tigellinus, Epaphroditus  
and Neophilus.*

*Nero.* *Tigellinus*, said the villaine *Proculus*  
I was throwne downe in running ?

*Tigel.* My Lord, he said that you were crown'd for that  
You could not doe.

*Nero.* For that I could not doe ?

Why, *Elis* saw me do't, and do't with wonder  
Of all the Judges, and the lookers on :  
And yet to see, A villaine ? could not do't ?  
Who did it better ? I warrant you he said  
I from the Chariot fell against my will.

*Tigel.* He said my Lord, you were throwne out of it,  
All crush't, and maim'd, and almost bruil'd to death.

*Nero.* Malicious Rogue, when I fell willingly,  
To show of purpose, with what little hurt  
Might a good rider beare a forced fall.  
How sayest thou ? *Tigellinus*, I am sure  
Thou hast in driving as much skill as he.

*Tigel.* My Lord, you greater cunning shew'd in falling,  
Then had you late.

*Nero.* I know I did ; or bruised in my fall ?  
Hurt ? I protest I felt no griefe in it.  
*Go* *Tigellinus*, fetch the villaines head,  
This makes me see his heart in other things ?  
Fetch me his head, he ne're shall speake againe.  
What doe we Princes differ from the durt,  
And basenesse of the common multitude,  
If to the scorne of each malicious tongue  
We subject are : For that I had no skill ;  
Not he, that his farre famed daughter set  
A prise to Victory, and had bin crown'd  
With thirteene Sutors deaths, till he at length  
By fate of gods, and servants treasons fell,  
(Shoulder eac't *Pelops* glorying in his spoyles,)  
Could with more skill his coupled horses guide.  
Even as a Barke, that through the moving Flood,

*Exit Tigel*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Her linnen wings, and the forc't ayre doe beare,  
The Billowes fome, she smoothly oves them through :  
So past my burning Axeltree along,  
The people follow with their eyes and voice,  
And now the wind doth see it selfe ouerun,  
And the Clouds wonder to be left behind ;  
Whilst the voydayre is fil'd with noyse and dynne,  
And *Neroe* name doth beate the brazen Skie,  
*Impiter* envying, loath doth heare my praise :  
Then there greene bowes, and Crownes of *Olive* wreath's  
The Conquerors prayse, they give me as my due,  
And yet this Rogue saith, no, we have no skill.

*Enter a servant to them.*

*Servant.* My Lord, the Stage, and all the furniture—

*Nero.* I have no skill to drive a Chariot :  
Hid he but robd mee, broke my treasurie,  
The red Sea's mine, mine are the *Indian* stones,  
The Worlds mine owne, then cannot I be robde ?  
But spightfully to undermine my fame,  
To take away my Art ; he would my life  
As well, no doubt ; could he told how.

*Enter Tegillinus, with Proculus head.*

*Neoph.* My Lord,  
*Tegillinus* is come with *Proculus* head.

*Nero.* O cry thee mercy good *Neophyus* :  
Give him five hundred lesterces for amends,  
Hast brought him *Tegillinus* ?

strikes  
him

*Tegil.* Heres his head my Lord.

*Nero.* His tonge had bin enough.

*Tegil.* I did as you commanded me my Lord.

*Nero.* Thou toldst me not, though he had such a Nose,

Now are you quiet, and have quiet me ;

This tis to be commander of the World,

Let them extoll weake pitty that doe need it,

Let men cry to have Law and justice done,

And tell their grieves to Heaven, that hears them not,

Kings must upon the peoples headieſſe contriſſe

Walke to ſecuritie, and eafe of minde.

Why

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Why what have we to doe with th'ayrie names  
(That old age and *Philosophers* found our,)  
Of *Injustice*, and (ne're certayne) *Equitie* ;  
The Gods revenge themselfes, and so will we :  
Where right is scand, *Authoritie* is overthowne,  
We have a high prerogative above it ;  
Slaves may doe what is just, we, what we please,  
The people will repine, and thinke it ill,  
But they must beare, and prayse too, vwhat we will,

*Enter Cornutus to them.*

*Neoph.* My Lord, *Cornutus*, whom you sent for's come.

*Nero.* Welcome good *Cornutus*.

Are all things ready for the Stage,  
As I gave charge.

*Corn.* They onely stay your comming.

*Nero.* *Cornutus*, I must act to day *Orestes*.

*Corn.* You have done that alreadie ; and too truly — *afida*.

*Nero.* And vwhen our Sceane is done, I meane besides  
To read some composeters of mine owne,  
Which for the great opinion I my selfe,  
And *Rome* in general, of my Judgement, hath,  
Before I publish them, Ile shew them thee.

*Corn.* My Lord, my disabilitie —

*Nero.* I know thy mode stie,  
I leonly shew thee, now, my works beginning :  
Goe see *Epaphroditus*,  
Musicke make ready, I vwill sing to day.

*Exit Epa.*

*Cornutus* I pray thee come neere,  
And let me heare thy Judgement in my paines :  
I would have thee more familiar good *Cornutus*,  
*Nero* doth prize desert, and more esteemes  
Them, that in knowledge second him, then power,  
Marke with what stile and state my worke begins.

*Cornu.* Might not my interruption offend,  
Whats your worke's name my Lord, vwhat write you of ?

*Nero.* I meane to write the deeds of all the *Romans*.

*Cornu.* Of all the *Romans* ! a huge argument.

*Nero.* I have not yet bethought me of a Title.

### The Tragedie of Nero.

You Enthrall Powers which the wide Fortunes doome  
Of Empire crown'd, seven mountaine-seated Rome  
Fall blonne; Inspire me with Machilæan rage,  
That I may bellow out Romes Prentisage,  
As when the Menades doe fill their Drums,  
And crooked hornes with Mimalonean hummes,  
And Eanion doe Ingeminate around,  
Which reparabile Ecchoe doe resound.

How doest thou like our Muses paines *Cornutus*.

*Cornu.* The vesses have more in them, then I see;  
Your worke my Lord I doubt will be too long.

*Nero.* Too long?

*Tigel.* Too long?

*Cornu.* I, If you write the deeds of all the *Romanis*  
How many Bookes thinke you t' include it in?

*Nero.* I think to write about foure hundred bookees.

*Cornu.* Foure hundred? why my Lord they'lere be read.

*Nero.* Hah?

*Tigel.* Why he, whom you esteeme so much, *Crisippus*,  
Wrote many more.

*Cornu.* But they were profitable to common life,  
And did Men, Honesty, and Wisedome teach.

*Nero.* *Tigellinus?*

*Exit Nero & Tigel.*

*Cornu.* See with what earnestnesse he crav'd my judgement,  
And now he freely hath it, how it likes him?

*Neoph.* The Prince is angry, and his fall is neere;  
Let us be gon, least we partake his ruines.

*Exeunt omnes prater Cornu.*

### *Manes Cornutus Solus.*

What should I doe at Court? I cannot lye;  
Why didst thou call me, *Nero*, from my booke?  
Didst thou for flatterie of *Cornutus* looke?  
No, let those purple Fellowes that stand by thee,  
(That admire shew, and things that thou canst give,  
Leave to please Truth, and Virtue, to please thee.  
*Nero*, ther's nothing in thy power, *Cornutus*  
Doth wish or feare.

*Ensay*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Tigellinus to him.*

*Tigel.* Tis *Nero's* pleasure that you straight depart  
To *Giara*, and there remaine confind :  
Thus he out of his Princely Clemencie,  
Hath death, your due, turn'd but to banishment.

*Cornu.* Why *Tigellinus* ?

*Tigel.* I have done, upon your perill, goe or stay. *exit Ti.*

*Cornu.* And why should Death ? or Banishment be due ?  
For speaking, that which vvas requir'd, my thought :  
O why doe Princes loue to be deceiu'd ?  
And, even, doe force abuses on themselves ?  
Their Eares are so with pleasing speech beguil'd,  
That Truth they malice, Flatterie, truth account,  
And their owne Soule, and understanding lost,  
Goe (what they are) to seeke in other men.  
Alas, weake Prince, how hast thou punish't me,  
To banish me from thee ? O let me goe  
And dwell in *Taurus*, dwell in *Ethiope*,  
So that I doe not dwell at *Rome* with thee.  
The farther still, I goe from hence, I know,  
The farther I leave Shame and Vice behind.  
Where can I goe, but I shall see thee, *Seneca* ?  
And *Heaven* will be as neare me, still, as here.  
Can they, so farre, a knowing soule exile,  
That her owne roofe she see not ore her head ?

*Exit.*

*Enter Piso, Sceninius, Lukan, Flanini.*

*Piso.* Noble Gentlemen, what thankes, what recompence  
Shall he give you, that give to him the World ?  
One life to them, that must so many venture,  
And that, the worst of all, is too meane pay ;  
Yet can I give no more ; Take that, bestow it  
Vpon your service.

*Lucan.* O *Piso*, that vouchsafest,  
To grace our headlesse partie with thy name ;  
Whom having our conductor, wee need not  
Haue fear'd to goe against the well try'd valour  
Of *Julius*, or stayednesse of *Augustus*,  
Much lesse the shame and Womanhood of *Nero* ;

*When*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

When we had once given out, that our pretence  
VVere all for thee, our end to make thee Prince,  
They thronging came to give their names, Men, VVomen,  
Gentlemen, People, Soldiers, Senators,  
The Campe and City, grew ashame that *Nero*,  
And *Piso* should be offered them together.

*Scen. 1.* We seeke not now (as in the happie dayes  
O'ch common wealth they di'd) for libertie ;  
O you, deare Master, *Cassius* and *Brutus*,  
That was vwith you intomb'd, there let it rest,  
We are contented with the galling yoke,  
If they vvil only leau us necks to beare it :  
VVe seeke no longer freedome, we seeke life,  
At least, not to be murdered, let us die  
On enemies swords ; Shall we, whom neither  
The *Median* Bow, nor *Macedonian* Speare,  
Nor the fierce *Gauls*, nor painted *Britons* could  
Subdue, lay downe our necks to Tyrants axe ?  
VVhy doe we talke of Virtue that obey  
VVeakenesse and Vice.

*Piso.* Have patience good *Scenius*.

*Lucan.* VVeakenesse and servile government we hitherto  
Obeyed have, vwhich, that vve may no longer,  
VVe haue our lives, and fortunes novv set up,  
And have our cause with *Piso*'s credit streng:hened.

*Flavi.* VVhich makes it doubtfull, whether loue to him  
Or *Nero*'s hatred, hath dravne more unto us.

*Piso.* I see the good thoughts you have of me, Lords.  
Lets now proceed to th'purpose of our meeting,  
I pray you take your places.  
Lets have some Paper brought

*Scen. 2.* Who's within.

Enter *Milichus* to them.

*Mil.* My Lord.

*Scen.* Some Inke and Paper.

*Flavi.* Who's that *Scenius* ?

*Scen.* It is my freed man *Milichus*.

*Luc.* Is he truske ?

Exit *Mil.* & enters  
again with Inke  
and Paper.

*Scen.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Sceni.* I for as great matters, as we are about.

*Pis.* And those are great ones.

*Luca.* I aske not that we meane to need his trust,  
Gaine hath great Soveraigntie ore seruile minds.

*Sceni.* O but my benefits hane bound him to mee,  
I, from a bondman, have his state not only  
Advanc't to freedome, but to wealth and credit.

*Piso.* *Melichus*, vwait i'th next chamber til we cal. *abscundis* so  
The thing determinde on our meeting now,  
Is of the meanes, and place, due circumstance,  
As to the doing of things 'tis requir'd,  
So done it names the action.

*Melic.* I wonder,  
What makes this new resort to haunt our house,  
When wonted *Lucius Piso* to come hither?

Or *Lucan*, when so oft, as now of late.

*aside*

*Piso.* And since the field, and open shew of armes  
Dislike you, and that for the Generall good,  
You meane to end all stirres, in end of him:  
That, as the ground, must first be thought upon.

*Melic.* Besides, this comming cannot be for forme,  
Or visitation, they goe aside, *aside*  
And haue long conferences by themselves.

*Luca.* *Piso*, his comming to your house at *Baie*,  
To bath, and banquet, will fit meanes afford,  
Amidst his cups, to end his hated life,  
Let him die drunke, that nere liu'd soberly.

*Piso.* O bee it farre, that I should staine my Table,  
And gods of Hospitalitie with blood;  
Let not our cause (novv innocent) be sayl'd  
With such a blot, nor *Piso*'es name made hatefull.  
What place can better fit our action  
Then his owne house? that boundiesse envied heape,  
Built with the spoyles, and blood of Citizens  
That hath taken up the Citie, left no Roome  
For *Rome* to stand on; *Romanes* get you gone,  
And dwell at *Uria*, if that *Uria* too  
This house o'erunne not.

D

*Lucan*

## The Tragedie of Nero.

*Lucan.* But 'twill be hard to doe it in his house,  
And harder to escape being done. *Piso.* Not so,  
*Brutus* the Captaine of our Guard's with us,  
And divers other oth' *Pretorian Band*,  
Already made; many, though unacquainted  
With our intents, have had disgrace and wrongs,  
Which grieve them still; most will be glad of change,  
And even they that lov'd him best, when once  
They see him gone, will smile o'th' comming times,  
Let goe things past, and looke to their owne safetie:  
Besides th' astonishment and feare will be  
So great, so sodaine, that 'twill hinder them  
From doing any thing.

*Melius.* No private businesse can concerne them all; aside  
Their countenances are troubled, and looke sad,  
Doubt and Importance in their face is read.

*Lucan.* Yet still I thinke it were  
Safer t'attempt him private, and alone.

*Flavius.* But 'twill not carry that opinion with it,  
Twill seeme more foule, and come from private malice.  
*Brutus,* and they to right the common caufe,  
Did chuse a publike place.

*Sceni.* Our deed is honest, why should it seeke corners?  
'Tis for the people done, let them behold it;  
Let me have them a witnesse of my truth,  
And love to th' Common wealth; The danger's greater,  
So is the glory. Why should our pale counsels  
Tend whither feare, rather then vertue calls them:  
I doe not like these cold considerings;  
First, let our thoughts looke up to what is honest,  
Next, o what's safe; If danger may deterre us;  
Nothing thats great, or good shall ere be done;  
And, when we first gaue hands upon this deed  
To th' commons safety, we our owne gave up.  
Let no man venture on a Princes death,  
How bad soever, with beliefe to escape;  
Despaire must be our hope, fame, or reward.  
To make the generall liking to concurre

With

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

With others, were even to strike him in his shame,  
Or (as he thinks) his glorie on the Stage,  
And so too truly mak't a Tragedy ;  
When all the people cannot chuse but clasp  
So sweet a close, and 'twill not *Cesar* be  
That shall be slaine, a *Romane* Prince :  
Twill be *Alcman*, or blind *Oedipus*.

*Mel.* And if it be of publique matters 'tis not  
Like to be talke, or idle fault finding,  
On which the coward onely spends his wisedome :  
These are all men of action, and of spirit,  
And dare performe what they determine on.

*Lucan.* What thinke you of *Poppaea*, *Tigellinus*,  
And the other odious instrumens of Court :  
Were it not best at once to rid them all ?

*Sceni.* In *Casars* ruine, *Anthony* was spared :  
Lets not our cause with needless blood distaine,  
One only mov'd, the change will not appeare  
When too much licence given to the sword,  
Though against ill, will make even good men feare :  
Besides, things ferled, youat pleas're may  
By Law, and publique Judgement have them tride.

*Mel.* And if it be but talke oth' State, 'tis Treason,  
Like it they cannot, that they cannot doe :  
If seeke to mend it, and remoue the Prince,  
That's highest Treason ; change his Counsellors,  
That's alteration of the gouernment,  
The common cloake that Treasons mu'fled in ;  
If laying force aside, to seeke by sure,  
And faire petition to have the State reform'd,  
That's tu'oring of the Prince, and takes away,  
Th' one his person, this his Soveraigntie ;  
Barely in private talke to shew dislike  
Of what is done, is dangerous ; therefore the action  
Mislike you, cause the doer likes you not ?  
Men are not fit to live ith' state they hate.

*Piso.* Though we would all have that imployment sought,  
Yet since your worthy forwardnesse, *Scenimus*,

### *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Prevents us, and so Nobly beggs for danger :  
Be this the chosen hand to doe the deed,

The fortune of the Empire speed your fword.

*Sceni.* Vertue, and heaven speed it ; O you homeborne

Gods of our country, *Romulus* and *Vesta*,

That *Thuscan Tiber*, and *Romes* towers defends :

Forbid not yet at length a happy end

To former euills ; Let this hand revenge

The wronged world ; enough we now have suffered. *exiunt.*

*Manes Melichus solus.*

*Meli.* Tush, all this long consulting's more then words,

It ends not there ; th'ave some attempt, some plot,

Against the state : well, Ile obserue it farther,

And if I find it, make my profit of it.

*Exit.*

*Finis Actus Secundi.*

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### *Actus Tertius.*

*Enter Poppea solus.*

*Popp.* I looket *Nimphidius* would have come ere this ;  
Makes he no greater hast to our embraces ?  
Or, doth the easines abate his edge ?  
Or, seeme we not as faire still as wee did ?  
Or, is he so with *Neroes* playing wonne,  
That he, before *Poppea*, doth preferre it ?  
Or doth he thinke to have occasion still ?  
Still, to have time to waite on our stolne meetings ?

*Enter Nimphidius to her.*

*Popp.* But see his presence now doth end those doubts,  
What i'st *Nimphidius* hath so long detain'd you ?

*Nimph.* Faith Lady, causes strong enough,  
High walls, bard doores, and guards of armed men.

*Poppe.* Were you imprisoned then, as you were going  
To the Theater.

*Nimph.* Not in my going Lady,

But

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

But, in the Theater, I was imprisoned  
For, after he was once upon the Stage,  
The Gates were more severely loekt unto,  
Then at a tovns besieg'd ; No man, no cause  
Was currant, no, nor passant ; At other fights  
The strife is onely to get in, but here  
The stirre was all, in getting out againe ;  
Had we not bin kept to it so, I thinke  
T'would nere have bin so tedious, though I know,  
'Twas hard to judge, whether his doing of it  
Were more absurd, then 'twas for time to doe it.  
But when we once were forc't to be spectators,  
Compel'd to that, which should have bin a pleasure,  
We could no longer beare the wearisomnesse :  
Vo paine so irketome, as a forc't delight ;  
Some fell downe dead, or seem'd at least to doe so,  
Vnder that colour to be carried forth.  
Then death first pleasur'd men, the shape all feare  
Was put on gladly, some clombe o're the walls,  
And so, by falling caught in earnest that,  
Which th'other did dissemble ; There were women  
(That being not able to intreat the guard  
To let them passe the gates) were brought to bed  
Amid'st the throngs of men, and made *Lucina*  
Blush, to see that unwonted company.

*Poppe.* If 'twere so straighdly kept, how got you forth ?

*Nimp.* Faith Lady, I came, pretending hast  
In Face and countenance, told them I was sent  
For things, bith' Prince forgot about the scene,  
Which, both my credit made them to beleeve,  
And *Nero*, newly whispered me before.  
Thus did I passe the gates, the danger Lady  
I have not yet escap't.

*Poppe.* What danger meane you ?

*Nim.* The danger of his anger, when he knowes  
How I thus shrunke away, for there stood knaves  
That put downe in their Tables all that stir'd,  
And markt in each their cheere fulnesse or sadnessse.

## The Tragedie of Nero.

*Poppe.* I warrant Ile excuse you : But I pray,  
Let's be a little better for your sight ;  
How did our Princely husband act *Orefess* ?  
Did he not wish againe his Mother living ?  
Her death would adde great life unto his part :  
But come I pray, the story of your sight.

*Nim.* O do not drive me to those hatrefull paines ;

Lady, I was too much in seeing vext,

Let it not be redoubled with the telling ;

I now am well, and heare, my cares set free ;

O be mercifull, doe not bring me backe

Vnto my prison, at least free your selfe,

It will not passe away, but stay the time ;

Wracke out the houres in length ; O give me leaue,

As one that wearied with the toyle at Sea,

And now on wished shore hath firm'd his foote ;

*x* He lookest about, and glads his thoughts and eyes,

With sight oth' green cloath'd ground, & leavy trees,

Of flowers that begge more then the looking on,

And likes these other waters narrow shores ;

So let me lay my weariness in these armes,

Nothing but kisstes to this mouth discourse,

My thought be compast in those circl'd Eyes ;

Eyes on no object looke, but on these Cheekees ;

Be blest my hands with touch of those round brests,

Whiter and softer then the downe of Swans.

Let me of thee, and of thy beauties glory,

And endlesse tell, but never wearyng story.

*Excuse*

*Enter Nero, Epaphroditus, Neophilus.*

*Nero.* Come Sirs, Ifaith, how did you like my acting ?

What ? wast not as you lookest for ?

*Epaph.* Yes my Lord, and much beyond.

*Nero.* Did I not doe it to the life ?

*Epaph.* The very doing never was so lively,  
As now this counterfeiting.

*Nero.* And when I came,  
Toth' point of ~~Agrippa, Clitemnebras~~ death,  
Did it not move the feeling auditory ?

*Epaph.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Epaph.* They had bin stonest, whom that could not have moved  
*Nero.* Did not my voice hold out well to the end ?  
And seru'd me afterwards afresh to sing with.

*Neoph.* We know *Apollo* cannot match your voice.

*Epaph.* By *Love*, I thinke you are the *God* himselfe,  
Come from above, to shew your hidden arts ;  
And fill us men with wonder of your skill.

*Nero.* Nay faith speake truely, doe not flatter me ;  
I know you need not : flattery's but where  
Desert is meane.

*Epaph.* I sweare by thee *O Cesar* ;  
Then whom no povver of Heaven I honour more,  
No mortall voice can passe, or eqall thine.

*Nero.* They tell of *Orpheus*, when he took his *Lute*  
And mov'd the Noble Ivory with his touch :  
*Hebrus* stood still, *Panga* bow'd his head,  
*Offa* then first shooke off his snow, and came  
To listen to the movings of his song ;  
The gentle *Popler*, tooke the *Oake* along,  
And call'd the *Pyne* downe, from his Mountain seate ;  
The *Virgine Bay*, although the Arts she hites  
*O. h'Delphickes God*, was with his voice o'recome,  
He his twice-lost *Euridice* bewailes,  
And *Proserpines* vaine gifts, and makes the shores  
And hollo w caves of forrests now untreed  
Bearc his griece company, and all things teacheth  
His lost loves name ; Then water, ayre, and ground,  
*Euridice*, *Euridice*, refound.  
These are bold tales, of which the *Greeks* have store ;  
But if he could from Hell once more returne,  
And would compare his hand and voice with mine,  
I, though himselfe were judge, he then should see,  
How much the *Latine* stains the *Thracian* lyre,  
I oft have walkt by *Tybers* flowing bankes,  
And heard the *Swan* sing her owne Epitaph,  
When she heard me, she held her peace and died.  
Let others raise from earthly things their praise,  
Heaven hath stood still to heare my happy ayres.

And

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

And ceaſt th' eternall Musicke of the Spbeares,  
To marke my voyce, and mend their tunes by mine.

*Neoph.* O divine voice !

*Euph.* Happy are they that heare it.

*Enter Tigellinus to them.*

*Nero.* But here comes *Tigellinus*, come, thy bill,  
Are there ſo many ? I ſee I have enemies.

*Euph.* Have you put *Caius* in, I ſaw him frowne.

*Neoph.* And in the midſt o' th' Emperors action,  
*Gallus* laught out, and as I thinke in ſcorne.

*Nero.* *Vefpazian* too aſleepe; was he ſo drowſie ?  
Well, he ſhall ſleepe the Iron ſleepe of death  
And did *Thraſea* looke ſo ſowrely on us ?

*Tig.* He never ſmild my Lord, nor would vouchſafe  
With one applaunte to grace your action.

*Nero.* Our action needed not be grac'd by him,  
Hee's our old enemy, and ſtill Maligneſſus ;  
'Twill have an end, nay it ſhall have an end.  
Why, I have bin too pittifull, too remiſſe,  
My eaſineſſe is laught at, and contemn'd,  
But I will change it ; Not as heretefore,  
By ſingling out them, one by one to death,  
Each common man can ſuch revenges have ;

A Princes anger muſt lay defolat  
Cities, Kingdomes conſume, Roote up mankind.  
O could I live to ſee the generall end,  
Behold the world enwrapt in funerall flame,  
When as the *Sun* ſhall lend his beames to burne  
What he before brought forth, and water ſerve,  
Not to extinguish, but to nurſe the fire :  
Then, like the *Salamander*, bathing me  
In the laſt Aſhes of all mortall things  
Let me give up this breath ; *Priam* was happy,  
Happy indeed, he ſaw his *Troy* burnt,  
And *Illiion* ly on heapes ; Whilſt thy pure ſtreames,  
(Divine *Scamander*) did run *Phrygian* blood  
And heard the pleasant cries of *Troian* Mothers.  
Could I ſee *Rome* ſo !

*Tigel.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Tigel.* Your Maiestie may easily,  
Without this trouble to your sacred mind.

*Nero.* What may I easily doe? kill thee, or him,

How may I rid you all? where is the man

That will all others end, and last himselfe?

O that I had thy Thunder in my hand,

Thou idle Rover, Ile not shoothe at trees,

And spend in woods my unregarded vengeance,

Ile shiver them downe upon their guiltie roofes,

And fill the streets with bloody burials.

But 'tis not Heaven can give me what I seeke,

To you, you hated kingdomes of the night,

You severall powers, that not like those above,

Will with faire words, or childrens cryes be wounne.

That have a stile beyond that Heaven is proud of,

Deriving not from ~~not~~ a makers Name,

But in destruction power, and terror shew:

To you I flye for succour: you, whose dwellings

For torments are bely'de, must give me ease;

Furies lend me your fires, no they are here,

They must be other fires; materiall brands

That must the burning of my heate allay:

I bring to you no rude unpractiz'd hands,

Already doe they reeke with mothers blood:

Tush, that's but innocent, to what now I meane,

Alasse what evill could these yeeres commit,

The world in this shall see my settled wit.

*Excuse.*

*Enter Seneca, Petronius.*

*Senec.* Petronius, you were at the *T* beater.

*Petron.* Seneca I was, and saw your Kingly Pupill

In Minitrels habit, st and before the Judges,

Bowing those hands, which the worlds Scepter hold,

And with great awe and reverence beseeching

Indifferent hearing, and an equall doome:

Then *Casar* doubting first to be ore-borne,

And so he joyn'd himselfe to th'other singers,

And straightly all other Lawes oth' Stage obseru'd,

As not (though weary) to sit downe, not spit,

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Not wipe his sweat off, but with what he wore ;  
Meane time how would he eye his adverstaries,  
How he would seeke to have all they did disgrac't,  
Traduce them privily, openly raille at them :  
And them he could not conquer so, he would  
Corrupt with money, to doe worse then he.  
This was his singing part, his acting now.

*Senec.* Nay, even end here, for I have heard enough,  
I'd have a Fidler heard him, let me not  
See him a Player, nor the fearefull voyce  
Of *Romes* great Monarch, now command in Iest  
Our Prince be *Agamemnon* in a Play.

*Petron.* Why *Seneca*? 'Tis better in a Play  
Be *Agamemnon*, then himselfe indeed ;  
How oft, with danger of the field beset,  
Or with home-mutinyes, would he unbee  
Himselfe, or, over cruell altars weeping,  
Wish, that with putting off a vizard, heo  
Might his true inward sorrow lay aside :

*x* The shewes of things are better then themselves :  
How doth it stirre this ayery part of us,  
To heare our Poet tell imagin'd fights,  
And the strange blowes, that fained courage gives,  
When I'd *Achilles* heare upon the Stage  
Speake Honour, and the greatnesse of his Soule ;  
Me thinkes I too, could on a *Phrygian* Speare  
Ronne boldly, and make tales for after times ;  
But when we come to act it in the deed,  
Death marrers this bravery, and the ugly feares  
Of th'other world, sit on the proudest browe,  
And boasting valour looseth his red cheeke.

*A Roman to them.*

*Rom.* Fire, fire, helpe, vve burne.

*2 Rom.* Fire, water, fire helpe fire.

*Senec.* Fire, where ?

*Petron.* Where ? what fire ?

*Rom.* O round about, here, there, on every side.  
The girdling flame, doth with unkind embraces

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Compass the Citie.

*Petro.* How came this fire, by whom?

*Senec.* Was chance, or purpose?

*Petro.* Why is't not quencht?

*Rom.* Alas there are a many there with weapons,  
And whether it be for pray, or by command,  
They hinder: nay, they throw on fire-brands.

*Enter Antonius to them.*

*Anton.* The fire encreaſeth, and will not be ſtaid,  
But like a ſtreame that tumbling from a hill,  
Orewhelms the fields, orewhelmes the hopefull toile  
Oth' husbandman, and headlong beares the woods;  
The unweeting Sheepheard on a Rocke aſſare,  
Amazed, heares the ſearfull noyſe; ſo here,  
Danger and Terror ſtrive which ſhall exceed,  
Some cry, and yet are well, ſome are kild ſilent,  
Some kindly runne to helpe their neighbours houſe,  
The vvhilſt their own's a fire: ſome ſave their goods,  
And leave their dearer pledges in the flame;  
One takes his little ſonnes with trembling hands,  
Tother his house-gods ſaves, which could not him,  
All bann the doore, and with vvhilſes kill  
Their abſent murderer.

*Petro.* What are the Gauls return'd?  
Doth Brennus brandiſh fire-brands once againe.

*Senec.* What can Heaven nowv unto our ſufferings add?

*Enter Another Romane to them.*

*Rom.* O all goes dovvine, *Rom* falleth from the Roofe,  
The vwind's aloft, the conqueiring flame turnes all  
Into it ſelue; Nor doe the gods eſcape,  
*Pleiades* burns, *Impiter*, *Saturne* burns.  
The Altar nowv is made a ſacrifice:  
And *Vesta* mournes, to ſee her Virgine fires  
Mingle with prophane aſhes.

*Senec.* Heaven, haſt thou ſet this end, to *Roman* greatneſſe?  
Were the Worlds ſpoyleſ, for this, to *Rome* diuided,  
To make but our fires bigger?  
You gods, vvhofc anger made us great, grant yet

The Tragette of Nero.

Some change in misery ; We begge not now,  
To have our Consull tread on *Asian* Kings,  
Or spurne the quiuered *Susa* at their feete ;  
This, we have had before ; we beg to live,  
At least not thus to die ; Let *Canons* come,  
Let *Allius* waters turne againe to blood.  
To these will any miseries be light.

*Petro.* Why with false *Auguries* have we bin deceived ?  
Why was our Empire told us, should endure  
With Sunne, and Moone, in time ; in brightnesse passe them,  
And that our end should be oth'world, and it.  
What, can Celestiall Godheads double too ?

*Senec.* O *Rome*, they enuy late,  
But now, the pittie of the world thee gets,  
The men of *Cholcas* at thy sufferings grieve,  
The shaggy dweller in the *Seithian* Rocks ;  
The most condeameed to perpetuall Snowe,  
That never wept at kindreds burials,  
Suffers with thee, and feeleth his heart to soften.  
O should the *Parthian* heare these miseries,  
He would, (his low and native hate apart)  
Sit downe with us and lend an *Enemies* teare,  
To grace the funeral fires of ending *Rome*.

*Exiunt*

*Soft Musique, Enter Nero alone with*

*Timbrell.*

I, now my *Troy* lookes beautious in her flames,  
The *Tirrheno* Seas are bright with *Roman* fires,  
Whilest the amazed Mariner astre,  
Gazing on th'unknowne light, wonders what starre  
Heaven hath begot, to easse the aged Moone.  
When *Pirrus*, stryding ore the cynders fit of  
On ground, where *Troy* late was ; and with his Eye  
Measur'd the heighth of what he had throwne downe.  
A Citie, great in people, and in power :  
Walles buik with bands of Gods ; He now forgive  
The ten yeces leaþynd thinkes his woundes well heald.  
Bath'd in the blood of *Priams* fiftie sonnes.  
Yet am not I appeasid, I must see more.

*Then*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Then Towers, and Columns tumble to the ground ;  
'Twas not the high built walles, and guiltieffe stones  
That *Nero* did provoke ; Themselves must be the wood  
To feed this fire, or quench it with their blood.

*Enter a Woman with a burnt Child.*

*Wom.* O my deare Infant, O my Child, my Child ;  
Vnhappy comfort of my nine moneths paines ;  
And did I beare thee onely for the fire,  
Was I to that end made a Mother ?

*Nero.* I now begins the scene that I would have.

*Enter a Man, bearing another dead.*

*Man.* O Father, speake yet ; no, the mercilesse blowe  
Hath all bereft speech, motion, sense, and life.

*Wom.* O beauteous innocense, whiteneſſe ill blackt,  
How to be made a coale couldſt thou deserve ?

*Man.* O reverend wrinkles, well becomming paleneſſe,  
Why hath death now lifes colours given thee,  
And mockes thee with the beauties of fresh youth ?

*Wom.* Why wert thou given me, to be tane away  
So ſoone, or could not heaven tell how to puniſh  
But firſt by bleſſing me ?

*Man.* Why were thy yeeres lengthened ſo long,  
To be cut off vntimely ?

*Nero.* Play on, play on, and fill the golden skies  
With cryes and pitie ; with your blood ; Mens eyet.

*Wom.* Where are thy flattering ſailes, thy pretty kiffes,  
And armes, that vront to writhe about my necke ?

*Man.* Where are thy Counſels, where thy good example ?  
And that kind roughneſſe of a Fathers anger ?

*Wom.* Whom have I now to leane my old age on ?

*Man.* Who ſhall I now have to ſet right my youth, *Wifkin*,  
Gods if ye be not fled from Heaven, helpe us.

*Nero.* I like this Muſickē vwell ; they like not mine :  
Now in the teares of all men, let me ſing,  
And make it doubtfull to the Gods above ;  
Whether the earth be pleas'd, or doe complaine.

*Cantat.*

*Man.* But, may the man, that all this blood hath ſhed,  
Never bequeath to th'earth, m old gray head ;

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Let him untimely be cut off before,  
And leave a curse like this all wounds and gore.  
Be there no friends at hand, no standers by,  
In love, or pittie mou'd, to close that eye.  
O let him dye the vvish and hate of all ;  
And not a teare to grace his Funerall.

*Exeunt.*

*Wom.* Heaven, you will heare (that which the world doth  
The prayers of misery, and soules forlorne : (scorne,)

Your anger waxeth by delaying stronger,  
O now for mercy be despis'd no longer.

Let him that makes so many Mothers childeſſe,  
Make his unhappy, in her fruitfulneſſe.

Let him no iſſue leave to beare his name,  
Or ſonne to right a fathers wronged fame,  
Our flames to quit ; be righteous in your yre,  
And when he dies, let him want funerall fire.

*Exeunt.*

*Nero.* Let heaven doe vwhat it vwill, this have I done  
Already : doe you feele my furies vvaight?  
*Rome* is become a grave of her late greatness ;  
Her clouds of smoke haue tane avvay the day,  
Her flames the night  
Novv unbelieveing eyes what crave you more ?

*Enter Neophilus to him.*

*Neoph.* O ſave your ſelfe (my Lord) your Pallace burnes.

*Nero.* My Pallace ? how ? vwhat traiterous hand ?

*Enter Tigellinus to them.*

*Tigell.* O flie my Lord, and ſave your ſelfe betimes,  
The Winde doth beate the fire upon your house,  
The eating flame devoures your double gates,  
Your pillars fall, your golden roofes doe melt,  
Your antique Tables, and Greeke Imagery  
The fire besets, and the smoake you ſee. (scot)  
Dothchoake my ſpeech, O flie, and ſave your life.

*Nero.* Heaven thou doſt ſtrive I ſee for Victory. (Exeunt.)

*Enter Nymfidius solus.*

*Nimp.* See howv Fates worke unto their purpos'd end ;  
And without all ſelfe-Industry will raife,  
Whom they determine to make great and happy :

*Nero.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Nero* throwes dovvne himselfe, I stirre him not,  
He runnes unto destruction, studies vvayes  
To compasse danger, and attaine the hate  
Of all ; Bee his owne wishes on his head :  
Nor *Rome* with fire, more then revenges burne :  
Let me stand still, or lye, or sleepe, I rise.  
*Poppæa* some new favour vwill seeke out  
My wakings to salute, I cannot stirre,  
But messengers of new preferment meete me :  
Novv, she hath made me Captaine of the Guard,  
So well I beare me in these night Alarmes,  
That she imagin'd I was made for Armes ;  
I novv command the Souldiour, he the Citie,  
If any chance doe turne the Prince aside,  
(As many hatreds, mischieves threaten him,)  
Ours is his Wife, his seate and thronē is ours,  
He's next in right that hath the stongest povvers.

*Exit.*

*[Enter Scenimus, Melichus.]*

*Scen. O Troy, and O yee soules of our forefathers,*  
Which in your countries fires were offered up,  
Hövv neere your Nephewves, to your fortunes come :  
Yet they vvere *Grecian* hands began your flame ;  
But that our Temples, and our houles smoake,  
Our Marble buildings turne to be our Tombes,  
Burnt bones, and spurn'd at Coarses fill the streetes,  
Not *Pirrbus*, nor thou *Hannibal*, art Author,  
Sad *Rome* is ruin'd by a *Romane* hand.  
But if to *Neros* end, this only vvay  
Heavens Justice hath chose out, and peopleslove  
Could not but by this feebling ills be mov'd ;  
We doe not then at all complaine our harmes,  
On this condition please us, let us die,  
And cloy the *Parisian* with revenge and pittie.

*Melic.* My Master hath seal'd up his Testament,  
Those bond-men which heliketh best set free,  
Given money, and more liberally then hee us'de :  
And now, as if a farewell to the World  
Were meant, A sumptuous banquet hath he made ;

*Yet*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Yet not with countenance that feasters use,  
But cheeres his friends the vvhilest himself lookest sad.

*Scen. I*. I have from fortunes Temple tane this sword,  
May it be fortunate, and now at least  
Since it could not prevent, punish the Evills  
To *Rome* it had bin better done before,  
But though leſſe helping now, they'le praise it more.  
Great Soveraigne of all mortall actions  
Whom only vvr̄tched men, and poēts blame,  
Speed thou the weapon, which I have from thee ;  
I'was not amidst thy Temple monuments  
In vaine repos'd, somewhat I know't hath done :  
O vwith new honours let it be layd up :  
Strike boldly arme, so many povverfull prayers  
Of dead and living hover over theo.

*Melic.* And though sometimes, with talke impertinent,  
And idle fancies, he vwould faine a mirth ;  
Yet is it easie scene, for ev̄ what is here  
The vvhich, he dares not let his face make shewv of.

*Scenin.* Long vwant of Losse hath made it dull and blunt :  
See *Melichus*, this vweapon's better edg'd.

*Melich.* Sharpening of svvords, vvh'en must vve then have  
Or meanes my Master, *Cato*-like, to exempt  
Himselfe from povver of Fates, and cloy'd vwith life,  
Give the gods backe their unregarded gift,  
But he hath neither *Cato*'s mind, nor cause ;  
A man gives ore to pleasures, and soft ease :  
Which makes me stil to doubt, howv in affaires  
Of Princes he dares meddle, or desires ?

*Scenin.* We shall have blowves on both sides, *Melichus* ;  
Provide me store of cloathes to bind up vvounds ;  
What an't bee heart for heart, Death is the vvorst ;  
The gods sure keepe it, hide from us that live,  
Howv svveete-death is, because vve should goo on  
And be their bailes : There are about the honſe  
Some stones that vwill stanch blood, see them set up :  
This World I see hath no felicity,  
Ile tric the other.

*Melichus.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Melito.* Neroes life is soft,  
The sword's prepar'd against anothers breast,  
The helpe for his : it can be no private foe,  
For then 'twere best to make it knovvne, and call  
His troupes of bond, and freed men to his ayd :  
Besides his Counsellors, *Seneca*,  
And *Lucan*, are no Managers of quarrells.

*Seemin.* Me thinkes, I see him strugling on the ground  
Hearre his unmanly outcries, and lost prayers  
Made to the gods, which turne their heads away.  
*Nero*, this day must end the worlds desires,  
And headlong send thee, to unquench'd fires.

*Melich.* Why doe I further idly stand debating,  
My proofes are but too many, and too pregnant,  
And Princes cares still to suspitions open :  
Who ever being but accus'd, was quitt  
For States are wise, and out of ills that may be ;  
Meane men must die, that t'other may sleepe sound,  
Chiefely, that rule, whose weakenes apt to feares,  
And bad deserts of all men, makes them know  
There's none but is in heart, what hee's accus'd.

*exit.*

*Exit.*

*Finis Actus Tertij.*

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*Actus Quartus.*

Enter *Nero*, *Poppaea*, *Nimphidius*, *Tigellinus*,  
*Neophytus*, and *Euphronius*.

*Nero.* **T** His kisse sweets Loue, Ile force from thee, and this,  
And of such spoiles, and victories be prouder,  
Then if I had the fierce *Paeonian*,  
Or Gray-cyd *German* ten times ouercome.  
Let *Indians* goe, and fight at th' end oth' world,  
And conquer from the wild inhabitants  
Their cold, and povertie ; whilst *Nero* here,  
Makes other warres, warres here the conquered gaines,

F

Where-

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

VVhere to o'recome, is to be prisoner.  
O willingly, I giue my freedome up,  
And put on my owne chaines ;  
And am in loue with my captiuitie ;  
Such *Venus* is, when on the sandy shore  
Of *Xanthus* or on *Idas* pleasant greene  
She leads the dance ; Her, the Nymphs all are we,  
And smiling graces doe accompany.  
If *Bacchus* could his stragling Minion  
Grace, with a glorious wreath of shining Starres ;  
Why should not heaven my *Poppaea* Crowne ?  
The Northern teeme shall moue into a round :  
New constellations rise, to honour thee ;  
The earth shall wooe thy favours, and the Sea  
Lay his rich shells, and treasure at thy feete.  
For thee, *Hidaspis* shall throw up his gold,  
*Panchais* breath the rich delightfull smells,  
The *Seres*, and the feather'd man of *Inde*  
Shall their fine Arts, and curios labour bring :  
And where the Sun's not knowne, *Poppaea* name  
Shal midst their feasts, and barbarous pompe be sung.  
*Popp.* I, now I am worthy to be Queen oth' world,  
Fairer then *Venus*, or the *Bacchus* loue :  
But yeaile anon unto you cut-boy, *Sporus*,  
Your new made vwoman ; to whom, now I heare  
You are wedded to.

*Nero.* I wedded ?

*Poppaea.* I, you wedded :

Did you not heare the words oth' *Auspices*,  
Was not the boy in bride-like garments drest,  
Marriage booke seald, as 'twere for issue, to  
Be had betweene you, solemne feasts prepar'd,  
VVhile all the Court, with *God-give you joy*, sounds.  
It had bin good *Domitius* your Father.  
Had nere had other VVife.

*Nero.* You frownd foole, y'are still so bitter, whose that ?

*Enter Melichus to them.*

*Nymph.* One that it seemes, my Lord doth come in hast.

*Nero.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Nero.* Yet in his face hee sends his tale before him,  
Bad nevves thou tell'est.

*Melis.* 'Tis bad I tell, but good that I can tell it,  
Therefore your Majestie will pardon me,  
If I offend your eares to save your life.

*Nero.* VVhy, is my life indanger'd?  
Hovv ends this circumstance? thou wrackst my thoughts.

*Melis.* My Lord, your life is conspir'd against,

*Nero.* By whom?

*Melis.* I must be of the vworld excus'd in this,  
If the great dutie to your Majestie  
Makes me all other lesser to neglect.

*Nero.* Th'art a tedious fellow v, speake, by whom?

*Melis.* By my Master?

*Nero.* VVho's thy Master?

*Melis.* *Sceninius.*

*Poppe.* *Sceninius*, why should he conspire?  
Vnlesse he thinke, that likenesse in conditions  
May make him too, vworthy oth' Empire thought.

*Nero.* VVho are else in it?

I thinke *Natilius*, *Subius*, *Flanius*,  
*Lucan*, *Seneca*, and *Lucius Piso*,  
*Asper*, and *Quintilianns*.

*Nero.* Hadone,  
Thoul't reckon all *Rome* anon, and so thou maist,  
Th'are villaines all, Ile not trust one of them;  
O that the *Romanes* had but all one necke.

*Poppe.* *Piso's* slie creeping into mens affections,  
And popular arts, have given long cause of doubt,  
And th'others late obseru'd discontents  
Risen from misinterpreted disgraces,  
May make us credit this relation.

*Nero.* VVhere are they? come they not upon us yet?  
See the Guard doubled, see the Gates shut up.  
Why, they're surprise us in our Court anon.

*Melis.* Not so my Lord, they are at *Piso's* house,  
And thinke themselves yet safe, and undescry'd.

*Nero.* Lets thither then.

## The Tragedie of Nero.

And take them in this false security ;

*Tigell.* I were better firste publish them traitors.

*Nimph.* That were to make them so,  
And force them all upon their enemies ;  
Now without stirre, or hazard theyle be tane.  
And boldly tryall dare, and law demand ;  
Besides, this accusation may be forg'd,  
By malice or mistaking,

*Poppea.* What likes you, doe *Nimphidius*, out of hand ;  
Two wayes distract, when either woulde preuale ;  
If they suspecting but this fellowes absence,  
Should try the City, and attempt their friends,  
How dangerous might *Piso's* favour be.

*Nimph.* I to himselfe would make the matter cleare,  
Which now upon one servants credit stands :  
The Cities favour keepes within the bonds  
Of profit, theyle love none, so hurt themselves ;  
Honour, and friendship they heare others name,  
Theymselfes doe neither forke, nor know the same ;  
To put them yet (though needesse) in some feare,  
Weele keepe their streets with armed companies :  
Then if they stirre, they see their wives, and houses  
Prepard a prey to th' greedy Souldier.

*Poppea.* But us be quicke then, you to *Piso's* house,  
While I, and *Tigellinus* further fist  
This fellowes knowledge.

*Ex. amnes Prater Nero.*

*Nero.* Looke to the gates, and walles oth' City, looke,  
The riuier be well kept, have watches set  
In every passage, and in every way.  
But who shall watch these watches, what if they  
Begin to play the traitors first ? O where shall I  
Seeke faith, or them that I may wisely trust ?  
The Citie favours the conspirators,  
The Senate, in disgrace, and feare haue liu'd ;  
The Campe, why most are souldiers that he named ;  
Besides, he knowes not all ; and like a foole  
I interrupted him, else had he named  
Those that stood by me ; Of securitie,

Which

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Which we so much seek after, yet art still  
To Court a stranger, and dost rather choose,  
The smoaky reedes, and sedgy cottages,  
Then the proud roofes, and wanton cost of Kings.  
O sweete despised joyes of pouerty,  
A happines unknowne unto the gods :  
Would I had rather in poore *Galij* bin,  
Or *Ulnbra*, a ragged Magistrate,  
Sate as a judge of measures, and of corne,  
Then the adored Monarch of the world.  
Mother, thou didst deservedly in this,  
That from a private, and sure state, didst raise  
My fortunes, to this slippery hill of greatnesse ;  
Where I can neither stand, nor fall with life. *Exit.*

*Enter, Piso, Lucan, Scenius, Flanis.*

*Flanis.* But since we are discover'd, what remaines ?  
But put our lives upon our hands, these swords  
Shall try us traitors or true Citizens.

*Sceni.* And what should make this hazard doubt successse,  
Stout men are oft with sudden onsets daunted,  
What shall this Stage-player be ?

*Luc.* It is not now,  
*Angustus* gravitie, nor *Tiberius* craft,  
But *Tigellinus*, and *Crisogorus*  
Eunuches, and women that we goe against.

*Scen.* This for thy own sake, this for ours we beg,  
That thou vvilt suffer him to be overcome ;  
Why shouldst thou keepe so many vovved swords  
From such a hated throate ?

*Flanis.* Or we shall soare,  
To trust unto the gods so good a cause ?

*Lucan.* By this we may our selves Heavens favour promise,  
Because all noblenesse, and worth on earth  
We see's on our side ; Here the *Faby*'s sonne,  
Here the *Cornini* are, and take that part ;  
Their noble Fathers would if nowv they liu'd ;  
There's not a soule that claimes Nobilitie  
Either by his, or his forefathers merit,

### The Tragedie of Nero.

But is with us ; with us the gallant youth  
VVhom passed dangers or hot blood makes bold :  
Staid men suspect their wisedome, or their faith,  
To vvhom our counsels we have not reveal'd.  
And while (our party seeking to disgrace)  
They traitors call us, Each man treason praiseth,  
And hateth faith, when *Piso* is a traitor.

*Scens.* And at adventure ? what by stoutnesse can  
Befall us vvorste, then will by cowardise ?  
If both the people, and the souldier fail'd us,  
Yet shall we die at least worthy ourselues,  
VVorthy our ancestors : O *Piso* thinke,  
Thinke on that day, when in the *Parthian* fields  
Thou cryedst to th' flying Legions to turne,  
And lookt Death in the face ; he vvas not grim,  
But faire and louely, when he came in armes.  
O why, there dy'd we not on *Syrian* swords ?  
VVere we referu'd to prisons, and to chaines.  
Behold the Galley-asses in every streeete,  
And even now they come to clap on yrons ;  
Must *Piso*es head be shewed upon a pole ?  
Those members torne ; rather then *Roman*-like,  
And *Piso*-like, vwith vweapons in our hands  
Fighting in throng of enemiesto die :  
And that it shall not be a civill vvarre  
*Nero* prevents, vvhose crueltie hath left  
Fevv Citizens, vve are not Romans novv,  
But Moores, and Ievves, and vtmest Spaniards,  
And *Aflass* refuge that doe fill the Citie.

*Piso.* Part of us are already tak'n, the rest  
Amaz'd, and seeking holes ; Our hidden ends  
You see layd open, Court, and City arm'd,  
And for feare joyning to the part they feare.  
Why should vve move desperat and hopelessse armes  
And vainely spill that noble blood that should  
Christall *Rubes*, and the *Median* fields,  
Not *Tiber* colour : And the more you shovv by  
Your loves, and readinesse to loose yout-lives,

The

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

The lother I am to adventure them,  
Yet am I proud, you would have for me dy'd,  
But live, and keepe your selves to worthier ends ;  
No Mother but my owne shall we epe my death,  
Nor will I make by overthrowing us,  
Heaven guiltie of more faults, yet from the hopes,  
Your owne good wishes, rather then the thing  
Doe make you see, this comfort I receive  
Of death unforc't, O friends, I would not die  
When I can live no longer ; 'Tis my glory,  
That free, and willing I give up this breath,  
Leaving such courages as yours untri'd,  
But to be long in talke of dying, would  
Shew a relenting, and a doubtfull mind :  
By this you shall my quiet thoughts intend ;  
I blame nor Earth, nor Heaven for my end.

*He dyss.*

*Lucan.* O that this noble courage had bin shewne,  
Rather on enemies breasts, then on thy owne.

*Sceni.* But sacred, and inviolate be thy will,  
And let it lead, and teach us ;  
This sword I could more willingly have thrust  
Through *Nero's* breast ; That, fortune deni'd me,  
It now shall through *Scensinus*.

*Enter Tigellinus solus.*

What multitudes of villaines are here gotten  
In a conspiracie ; which *Hydra* like,  
Still in the cutting off, increaseth more.  
The more we take, the more are still appeacht,  
And every man brings in new company.  
I wonder what we shall doe with them all,  
The prisons cannot hold more then they have,  
The Iayles are full, the holes with Gallants stinke,  
Strawe and gold lace together live I thinke :  
'Twere best even shut the Gates oth' City up,  
And make it all one Iayle ; for, this I am sure,  
There's not an honest man within the walles :  
And though the guilty doth exceed the free ;  
Yet through a base, and factall cowardise,

*They.*

## The Tragallie of Nero.

They all affist, in taking one another,  
And by their ovyne hands are to prison led.  
There's no condition, nor degree of men,  
But here are met ; Men of the sword, and gowne,  
Plebeians, Senators, and women too,  
Ladies that might have flaine him with their eye,  
Would use their handis, Philosophers,  
And Polititians ; Polititians ?  
Their plot vvas laid too short ; Poets would now  
Not onely write, but be the Argumets  
Of Tragedies : the Emperor's much pleas'd :  
But some have named *Senecca*, and I  
Will have *Petronius*, one promise of pardon,  
Or feare of torture, will accusers find.      *exist.*

*Enter Nymphidius, Lucan, Sceninius, with a guard.*

*Nymph.* Though *Piso*'s suddennesse and guilty hand  
Prevented hath the death he should have had ;  
Yet you abide it must.

*Lucan.* O may the earth lye lightly on his Coarse,  
Sprinkle his ashes with your flowers and teares,  
The loue and daisties of mankind is gone.

*Scen.* What only now we can, wee'le follow thee  
That way thou lead'ft, and waite on thee in death,  
Which vve had done, had not these hindred us.

*Nymph.* Nay, other ends your grievous crimes awaite,  
Ends which the law and your deserts exact.

*Scen.* What have we deserved ?

*Nymph.* That punishment that traitors unto Princes,  
And enemies unto the State they live in merit.

*Scenini.* If by the State this government you meane,  
I justly am an enemie unto it.

That's but to *Nero*, you, and *Tigellius* :  
That glorious World, that even beguiles the wise,  
Being lookt into, includes but threc or fours.  
Corrupted men, which were they all remou'd,  
Twould for the common State much better be.

*Nymph.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Nymph.* "Why, what can you i'th government mislike ?  
Vnlesse it grieve you that the World's in peace,  
Or that our armies Conquer without blood.  
Hath not his power with forraine visitations,  
And strangers honour more acknowledg'd bin,  
Then any was afore him ? Hath not he  
Dispos'd of frontier Kingdome, with successe,  
Given away Crownes, whom hee set up, prevailing ?  
The riviall seate of the *Arsacie*,  
That thought their brightness eqmall unto ours,  
It's crown'd by him, by him doth raigne ?  
If we have any warre, it's beyond *Rheme*,  
And *Emphrates*, and such whose different chances  
Have rather serv'd for pleasure, and discourse,  
Then troubled us ; At home the City hath  
Increast in wealth, with building bin adorn'd ;  
The Arts have flourish't, and the Muses sung,  
And that, his justice, and well tempered raigne,  
Hath the best Judges pleas'd, the powers divine ;  
Their blessing, and so long prosperity  
Of th'Empire under him, enough declare.

*Sceni.* You freed the State from warres, abroad, but 'twas  
To spoile at home more safely, and divert  
The *Partian* enmyt on us, and yet,  
The glory rather, and the spoiles of warre  
Have wanting bin, the losse and charge wee have,  
Your peace is full of cruelty, and wrong,  
Lavvest taught to speake to present purposes,  
Wealth, and faire houses dangerous faults become,  
Much blood ith' Cittie, and no common deaths,  
But Gentlemen, and consulary houses :  
On *Cesars* owne house looke, hath that bin free ?  
Hath he not shed the blood he calls divine ?  
Hath not that neerenes which should love beget  
Alwayes on him, bin cause of hate and feare ;  
Vertue, and power suspected, and kept downe :  
They whose great ancestors this Empire made,

G

Distrusted

## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Distrusted in the government thereof,  
A happy state, where *Decius* is a traitor,  
*Narcissus* true, nor only was't unsafe  
To offend the Prince, his treed men worse were feard,  
Whose wrongs with such insulting pride were heard:  
That even the faultie it made innocent:  
If we complain'd, that was it selfe a crime,  
I, though it were to *Casars* benefit;  
Our writings pry'd into, false guiltiness  
(Thinking each tax'ng pointed out it selfe)  
Our private whisperings listned after; nay,  
Our thoughts were forced out of us, and punisht:  
And had it bin in you, to have taken away  
Our understanding, as you did our speech,  
You would have made us thought this honest too?

*Nymph.* Can malice narrow eyes,  
See any thing yet more it can traduce  
*Sens.* His long continued taxes I forbear,  
In which he chiefly showed him to be Prince,  
His robbing Altars, sale of Holy things,  
The Antique Goblets of adored rust,  
And sacred gifts of Kings, and people sold:  
Nor was the spoile more odious, then the use  
They were employed on, spent on shame and lust  
Which still have bin so endlesse in their change,  
And made us know a divers servitude.  
But that he hath bin suffered so long,  
And prospered, as you say: for that to thee  
O Heaven, I turne my selfe, and cry; No God  
Hath care of us, yet have we our revenge,  
As much as Earth may be reveng'd on Heaven;  
Their divine honour *Nero* shall usurpe,  
And prayers, and feasts, and adoration have,  
As well as *Impiter*.  
*Nymph.* Away blaspheming tongue,  
Be ever silent for thy bitterness.

*Exeunt.*

*Exitus.*

The Tragedie of Nero.

Enter *Nero, Poppea, Tigellinus, Flavius, Neophilus, Epaphroditus, and a young man.*

*Nero.* What could cause thee,  
Forgetfull of my benefits, and thy oath,  
To seeke my life?

*Flavius.* Nero, I hated thee ;  
Nor was there any of thy souldiers  
More faidfull, while thou faith deseru'dst then I,  
Together did I leave to be a subject,  
And thou a Prince, *Cesar* was now become  
A player on the Stage, a Wagoner,  
A burner of our houles, and of us,  
A Paracide of Wife, and Mother.

*Tigell.* Villaine, dost know where, and of whom thou

*Nero.* Have you but one death for him, let it be  
A feeling one (*Tigellinus*) bee't  
Thy charge, and let me see thee witty in't.

*Tigell.* Come sirrah,  
Weele see how stoutly you'l stretch out your necke.

*Flavius.* Would thou durst strike as stoutly, *Ex. Tig. & Flau.*

*Nero.* And what's he there?

*Epaph.* One that in whispering oreheard  
What pitie 'twas, my Lord, that *Piso* died.

*Nero.* And why wast pitie sirrah, *Piso* died?

*Tong.* My Lord, 'twas pitie he deseru'd to die.

*Poppea.* How much this youth, my *Otho* doth resemble :  
*Otho*, my first, my best love, who is now  
(Under pretext of governing) exil'd  
To *Lucitania* honorably banisht.

*Nero.* Well, if you be so passionate,  
Ile make you spend your pitie on your Prince,  
And good men, not on traitors.

*Tong.* The gods forbid my Prince should pitie need.  
Somewhat, the sad remembrance did me stirre

## The Tragedie of Nero.

Oth' fraile and weake condition of our kind,  
Somewhat his greatnessse ; then whom yesterday,  
The World but *Cesar*, could shew nothing higher ;  
Besides, some vertues, and some worth he had,  
That might excuse my pitie, to an end  
So cruell, and unripe.

*Poppea.* I know not how this stranger moves my mind ;  
His face me thinkes is not like other mens,  
Nor doe they speake thus ; Oh, his wordes invade  
My weakened senses, and o'recome my heart.

*Nero.* Your pittie shewes, your favour and your will,  
Which side you are enclin'd too, had you power,  
You can but pitie, else shoud *Cesar* feare,  
Your ill affection then shall punish't be,  
Take him to execution, he shall die,  
That the death pities of mine enemie.

*Tong.* This benefit at least  
Sad death shall give, to free me from the power  
Of such a government ; and if I die  
For pittying humane chance, and *Pisces* end,  
There will be some too, that will pitie mine.

*Poppea.* O what a dauntlesse looke, what sparkling eyes,  
Threatning in suffering ; sure some Noble blood  
I shid in ragges, feare argues a base spirit :  
In him what courage, and contempt of death,  
And shall I suffer one I loue to die ?  
He shall not die : hands of this man, avvay,  
*Nero*, thou shalt noe kill this guiklesse man.

*Nero.* He guiklesse, trumpet ?  
Shee's in love with the smooth face of the boy.

*Spurns her and  
Poppea falls.*

*Neoph.* Alas my Lord you have slaine her.

*Epaph.* Helpe, she dies.

*Nero.* *Poppea*, *Poppea*, speake, I am not angry,  
I did not meane to hurt thee, speake sweete love.

*Neoph.* Shee's dead my Lord.

*Nero.* Fetch her againe, she shall not die,  
Ile ope the Iron gates of hell,

And

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

And breake the imprisoned shadowes of the deepe,  
And force from death this farre too worthy prey,  
Shee is not dead.

The crimson red, that like the morning shone,  
When from her vwindowes (all with Roses strewd)  
Shee peepeth forth, forsakes not yet her checkes,  
Her breath, that like a hony-suckle smelt  
Twining about the prickled Eglantine,  
Yet moves her lips; those quicke and piercing eyes,  
That did in beautie challenge heavens eyes  
Yet shine as they were vront: O no they doe not,  
See how they grovv obscure: O see, they close,  
And cease to take, or give light to the World.  
What starres so ere you are assur'd to grace  
The firmament, (for loe the twinkling fires  
Together throng, and that cleare milky space  
Of stormes, and *Pbiades*, and thunder void,  
Prepares your roome,) doe not with vvery aspect  
Looke on your *Nero*, who in blood shall mourne  
Your lucklesse fate; and many a breathing soule,  
Send after you to vwait upon their *Queene*;  
This shall begin, the rest shall follow after,  
And fill the streets vwith outcryes, and vwith slaughter.

*Exit.*

*Enter Seneca with two of his friends.*

*Senec.* What meanes your mourning, this ungratefull sorrow?  
Where are your precepts of *Philosophy*?  
Where our prepared resolution,  
So many yeres fore-studied against danger?  
To vvhom is *Nero*es crueltie unknovvne?  
Or what remained after mothers blood,  
But his instructers death? Leave, leave these teares,  
Death from me nothing takes, but vwhat's a burthen,  
A dlog to that free sparke of Heavenly fire:  
But that in *Seneca*, the vvhich you lou'd,  
Which you admir'd, doth, and shall still remaine  
Secure of death, untouched of the grave.

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*1. Friend.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

1. *Friend.* Weele not belie our teares, we waile not thee,  
It is our selves, and our owne losse we grieve ;  
To thee, what losse in such a change can be,  
Vertue is paid her due, by death alone ;  
To our owne losses doe we give these teares,  
That loose thy love, thy boundlesse knowledge loose,  
Loose the unpatterned sample of thy vertue,  
Loose whatsoe'er may praise or sorrow move ;  
In all these losses, yet of this we glory,  
That 'tis thy happiness that makes us sorry.

2. *Friend.* If there be any place for Ghosts of good men,  
If (as we have bin long taught) great mens soules  
Consume not with their bodies, thou shalt see,  
(Looking from out the dwellings of the ayre)  
True dutie to thy memory perform'd ;  
Not in the outward pompe of funerall,  
But in remembrance of thy deeds, and words,  
The oft recalling of thy many vertues,  
The tombe that shall th'eternall reliks keepe  
Of *Seneca*, shall be his hearers hearts.

*Senec.* Be not afraid my soule, goe cheerefully,  
To thy owne Heaven, from whence it first let down,  
Thou loath by this imprisoning flesh putst on,  
Now lifted up, thou ravisht shalt behold  
The truth of things, at which we wonder here,  
And foolishly doe wrangle on beneath ;  
And like a God shalt walke the spacious ayre,  
And see what even to conceit's deni'd.  
Great soule oth'world, that through the parts deful'd  
Of this vast All, guid'st what thou dost informe ;  
You blessed mindes, that from the *Sphæres* you move,  
Looke on mens actions not with idle eyes ;  
And gods we goe to, Aid me in this strife,  
And combatte of my flesh, that ending I,  
May still shew *Seneca*, and my selfe die.

*Exeunt.*

*Enter*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Antonius, Enanthe.*

*Ant.* Sure this message of the Princes,  
So grievous and unlookt for, will appall  
*Petronius* much.

*Enan.* Will not death any man?

*Ant.* It will; but him so much the more,  
That having liv'd to his pleasure; shall forgoe  
So delicate a life, I doe not marvell  
That *Seneca*, and such lowre fellowes, can  
Leave that they never tasted: But when we  
That have the *Nectar* of thy kisses felt,  
That drinke away the troubles of this life,  
And but one banquet make of forty yeeres,  
Must come to leave this: but soft, here he is.

*Enter Petronius, and a Centurion.*

*Petro.* Leave me a while, *Centurion* to my friends,  
Let me my fare well take, and thou shalt see,  
*Neroes* commandment quickly obaid in me. *Exit Centurion.*  
Come let us drink, and dash the pots with wine:  
Here throw your flowers; fill me a twelling bowle,  
Such as *Mecenas*, or my *Lucan* dranke  
On *Virgils* birth day.

*Enan.* What meanes (*Petronius*) this unseasonable  
And causelesse mirth? Why, comes not from the Prince  
This man to you a messenger of death?

*Petro.* Here faire *Enanthe*, whole p'umpe ruddy cheeke  
Exceeds the grape, it makes this; here my Gyrtle. *He drinkes*  
And thinkst thou death, a matter of such harme,  
Why, he must have this pretty dimpling chin,  
And wil peck out those eyes that now so wound.

*Enan.* Why, is it not th' extreameſt of all illſ?

*Petro.* It is indeed the laſt, and end of illſ;  
The gods, before th' wou'd let us taſt deaths loyes,

*Plac't*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Plac't us i'th toyle, and sorrovves of this World,  
Because vvc should perceive th'amends, and thanke them,  
Death, the grim knave but leads you to the doore,  
Wh're entred once, all curious pleasures come  
To meeete, and vwelcome you.  
A troupe of beauteous Ladies from vvhoſe eyes,  
Love, thousand arrovves, thousand graces shoothes ;  
Puts foorth their faire handſ to you, and invites  
To their greene arbours, and close shadowved walks,  
Whence, banisht is the roughnesſe of our yeeres :  
Onely the West Wind blovves ; I'th ever Spring,  
And ever Sommer : There the laden bowes  
Offer their tempting burdens to your hand,  
Doubtfull your eye, or taste inviting more :  
There euery man his ovne desires enjoyes ;  
Faire *Lucrece* lyes by lusty *Tarquins* ſide,  
And vvooes him now againe to ravifh her.  
Nor us, (though *Romans*) *Lais* will refufe,  
To *Corinth* any man may goe ; no maske,  
No envious garment doth th'ſe beauties hide,  
Which *Nature* made, so moving to be ſpide,  
But in bright Christall, which doth ſupply all,  
And vwhite transparent vailes they are attyr'd  
Through vwhich the pure ſnow underneath doth ſhine ;  
(Can it be ſnow, from vv'hence ſuch flames arise ?)  
Mingled vvith that faire company, ſhall vvc  
On bankes of *Violets*, and of *Hyacinths*  
Of loves devising, ſit, and gently ſport,  
And all the vwhile melodious Muſique heare,  
And Poets ſongs, that Muſique farre exceed  
The old *Anascan* crovvn'd with ſmiling flovvers,  
And amorous *Sapo*, on her Lesbian Lute  
Beauties ſweete Scarres, and *Cupids* godhead ſing.

*Anto.* What, be not ravifht with thy fancies, doe not  
Court nothing, nor make love unto our feares.

*Petro.* Iſt nothing that I ſay ?

*Anto.* But empty vvords.

*Petro.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Petro.* Why, thou requir'st some instance of the eyse,  
Wilt thou goe with me then, and see that World?  
Which either will returne thy old delights;  
Or square thy appetite anew to theirs.

*Anto.* Nay; I had rather farre beleeve thee here,  
Others ambition such discoveries seeke;  
Faith, I am satisfied with the base delights  
Of common men; A wench, a house I have,  
And of my owne a garden, Ile not change  
For all your walkes, and Ladies, and rare fruits.

*Petro.* Your pleasures must of force resigne to these,  
In vaine you shunne the sword, in vaine the Sea,  
In vaine is *Nero* fear'd, or flattered;  
Hither you must, and leave your purchas'd houses,  
Your new made garden, and your blacke brouvd wife,  
And of the trees thou hast so quaintly set;  
Not one, but the unpleasant Cypressse shall  
Goe vwith thee.

*Anto.* Faith 'tis true, we must at length,  
But yet *Petronius*, while we may, awhile  
We would enjoy them, those we have, w're sure of,  
When that you talke of's doubtfull, and to come.

*Petro.* Perhaps thou thinkst to live yet twenty yeeres,  
Which may unlookt for be cut off, as mine,  
If not, to endlesse time compar'd, is nothing  
What you endure must ever endure nowv;  
Nor stay not, to be last at table set,  
Each best day of our life at first doth goe,  
To them succeeds diseased age, and woe;  
Now die your pleasures, and the dayes your pray  
Your rimes, and loves, and jests vwill take away.  
Therefore my sweet, yet thou wilt goe with me,  
And not live here, to vwhat thou wouldest not see.

*Enan.* Would y' have me then kill my selfe, and die,  
And goe I know not to what places there?

*Petro.* What places dost thou feare?  
Th'ill favoured lake they tell that thou must passe,

H

And

### *The Tragedie of Nero.*

And thy blacke frogs that croake about the brim.

*Enan.* O pard on Sir, though death afrighes a woman ;  
Whose pleasures, though you timely here divine,  
The paines we know, and see.

*Petron.* The paine is life, death rids that paine away,  
Come boldly, there's no danger in this foord,  
Children passe through it ; If it be a paine,  
You have this comfort, that you past it are.

*Enan.* Yet all, as well as I, are loath to die.

*Petro.* Judge them by deed, you see them doe't apace.

*Enan.* I, but tis loathly, and against their wills.

*Petro.* Yet, knew you not that any being dead,  
Repented them, and would have liv'd againe :  
They then their errours saw, and foolish prayers,  
But you are blinded in the love of life,  
Death is but sweete to them that doe approach it,  
To me as one that taken with *Dolpicks* rage,  
When the divining God his breast doth fill,  
He sees what others cannot standing by,  
It seemes a beauteous, and a pleasant thing ;  
Where is my deaths Physitian ?

*Phys.* Here my Lord.

*Petro.* Art ready ?

*Phys.* I my Lord.

*Petro.* And I for thee :

*Nero,* my end shall mocke thy tyranny.

*Exeunt.*

*Finis Actus Quarti.*

### *Actus Quintus.*

*Enter Nero, Nimbidius, Tigellinus, Neophilus,  
Epaphroditus, and other attendants.*

*Nero.* **E**nough is wept *Poppae*, for thy death,  
Enough is bled, so many teares of others

*Wailing.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Wailing their losses have wip't mine away.  
Who in the common funerall of the vworld  
Can mourne on death?

*Tigell.* Besides, your Majestie this benefit  
In their deserved punishment shall reape  
From all attempts hereafter to be freed,  
Conspiracy is now for ever dasht,  
Tumult supprest, rebellion out of heart;  
In *Piso's* death, danger it selfe did die.

*Nymph.* *Piso* that thought to climbe by bowing downe  
By giving a way to thrive, and raisng others  
To become great himselfe, hath now by death  
Given quiet to your thoughts, and feare to theirs  
That shall from treason their advancement plot;  
Those dangerous heads that his ambition lean'd on,  
And they by it crept up, and from their meannesse  
Thought in this stirre to rise aloft, are off:  
Now peace, and safety waite upon your throne;  
Security hath wall'd your state about,  
There is no place for feare left.

*Nero.* Why, I never feard them.

*Nymph.* That was your fault.  
Your Majestie must give us leave to blame  
Your dangerous courage, and that noble soule  
Too prodigall of it selfe.

*Nero.* A Princes mind knowes neither feare nor hope,  
The beames of royll Majestie are such,  
As all eyes are with it amaz'd, and weaken'd,  
But it with nothing; I at first contemn'd  
Their weake devises, and faint enterprise:  
Why, thought they against him to have prevail'd,  
Whose childhood was from *Messalina's* spight  
By Dragons, (that the earth gave up) preserv'd,  
Such guard my cradle had; for fate had then  
Pointed me out, to be what now I am.  
Should all the Legions, and the Provinces  
In one united, against me conspire:

The Tragedie of Nero.

I could disperse them with one angry eye.  
My brow's an host of men; Come *Tigellinus*,  
Let's turne this bloody banquet, *Piso* meant us,  
Vnto a merry feast, weele drinke and challenge  
Fortune; who's that *Neophatus*?

Enter a Roman.

*Neoph.* A Currier from beyond the Alpes my Lord.

*Nero.* Newes of some German Victory belike,  
Or Britton overthrow.

*Neoph.* The Letters come from France.

*Nimph.* Why smiles your Majestie?

*Nero.* So I smile, I should be afraid ther's one  
In Armes *Nimphidius*.

*Nimph.* What arm'd against your Majestie?

*Nero.* Our Lieutenant of the Province, *Julius Vindex*.

*Tigel.* Who, that giddy French-man?

*Nimph.* His Province is disarm'd, my Lord, he hath  
No legion, not a souldier under him.

*Epaph.* One that by blood, and rapine would repaire  
His state confus'd in vanities, and lust.

Enter another Roman.

*Tigel.* He would not find out three to follow him,

*Amess.* More nevves my Lord.

*Nero.* Is it of *Vindex* that thou hast to say?

*Mess.* *Vindex* is up, and with him France in armes,  
The Noble men, and people throng to th'cause,  
Money, and Armour, Cities doe conferre,  
The Country doth send in provision,  
Yong'men bring bodies, old men lead them forth,  
Ladies doe coyne their Jewells into pay,  
The sickle now is fram'd into a sword,  
And drawing horses are to mangage taught,  
France nothing doth but vvar, and fury breath.

*Nero.* All this fierce talk's but *Vindex* doth rebell,  
And I will hang him.

*Tigel.* How long came you forth after the former messenger?

*Mess.* Foure dayes, but by the benefit of sea,

And

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

And weather, am arrived with him.

*Neoph.* How strong was *Vindicta* at your comming foorth?

*Mess.* He was esteem'd a hundred thousand.

*Tigel.* Men enough.

*Nimph.* And souldiers few enough.

Tumultuary troupes, undisciplin'd,  
Untrain'd in service, to vvaſt victuals good,  
But when they come to looke on warres blacke wounds,  
And but afarre off ſee the face of death.

*Nero.* It falles out for my empty coffers well,  
The ſpoyle of ſuch a large and goodly Province,  
Enricht with trade, and long enjoyed peace.

*Tigel.* What order will your Maieſty have taken  
For levying forces to ſuppreſſe this ſtirre?

*Nero.* What order ſhould we take? weeſe laugh and drinke,  
Thinkeſt thou it ſit my pleasures be diſturb'd  
VVhen any French-man liſt to breake his necke?  
They have not heard of *Pijo*es fortune yet,  
Let that caſe fight with them.

*Nimph.* VVhat order needs? your Maieſtie ſhall finde  
This French heate quickly of it ſelfe grovv cold.

*Nero.* Come avvay.  
Nothing ſhall come that this night's ſport ſhall stay.

*Exit Nero.*

*Mareſ Neophidius, Epaphroditus.*

*Neoph.* I wonder what makes him ſo confident  
In this revolt now grovvie unto a warre,  
And enſignes in the field, when in the other,  
Being but a plot of a conſpiracy,  
He ſhew'd himſelfe ſo wretchedly diſmaid?

*Epaph.* Faith, the right nature of a covvard to ſet light  
Dangers that ſee me farre off. *Pijo* was here,  
Ready to enter at the preſence doore,  
And dragge him out of his abuſed chaire,  
And then he trembled: *Vindicta* is in France,  
And many vwoods, and ſeas, and hilles betweene.

*Neoph.* 'Tvvras ſtrange that *Pijo* vvas ſo loone ſuppreſſeſ.

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Epaph.* Strange, strange indeed, for had he but come up,  
And taken the Court in that affright and stirre,  
While unresolv'd for whom or what to doe,  
Each on the other had in jealousie  
(While as apaled Maiestie not yet  
Had time to set the countenance) he would  
Have hazarded the Royall seate.

*Neoph.* Nay, had it without hazard ; at the Court  
Had for him bin, and those disclos'd their love,  
And favour in the cause, which now to hide  
And colour their good meanings ready were  
To shew their forwardnesse against it most.

*Epaph.* But for a stranger with a naked province,  
Without allies, or friends ith'state to challenge  
A Prince upheld with thirty Legions  
Rooted in fourte discents of Ancestors,  
And foureteene yeeres continuance of raigne,  
Why it is —

*Enter Nero, Nymphidius, Tigellinus to them. (ex. Nero, Nymph.*

*Nero, Galba and Spaine, what Spaine and Galba too ?*

*Epaph.* I pray thee *Tigellinus*, what furie's this ?  
What strange event, what accident hath thus  
Orecast your countenances ?

*Tigell.* Downe we were set at table and began  
With sparkling bowles to chase our feares away,  
And mirth and pleasure lookt out of our eyes ;  
When loe a breathlesse messenger comes in  
And tells how *Vindex*, and the powers of France  
Have *Sergius Galba* chosen Emperour,  
With what applause the Legions him receive,  
That *Spaine*'s revolted ; *Portingale* hath joy'd ;  
As much suspected is of *Germany* ;  
But *Nero*, not abiding out the end,  
Orethrevv the tables, dash't against the ground  
The cuppe which hee so much you knowv esteem'd ;  
Teareth his haire, and with incensed rage  
Curseth false men, and god's the lookers on.

*Neoph.*

*The Tragedy of Nero.*

*Nerph.* His rage we saw vvas wild and desperate.

*Epaph.* O you unsearched wisedomes, which doe laugh,  
At our security, and feares alike ?  
And plaine to shew our weakenesse, and your power  
Make us contemne the harmes, which surest strike  
When you our glories, and our pride undoe,  
Our overthrow you make ridiculous too.

*Exeunt.*

*Enter Nimpheus solus.*

Slow making counsels, and the sliding yeere  
Have brought mee to the long foreseen destruction  
Of this milled young man ; his State is shaken,  
And I will push it on ; revolted France ;  
Nor the conjured Provinces of *Spains*,  
Nor his owne guilt, shall like to me oppresse him ;  
I to his easie yeelding feares proclame  
New German mutinies, and all the vworld  
Rovvsing it selfe in hate of *Neroes* name ;  
I his distracted counsels doe disperse  
With fresh despaires, I animate the Senate  
And the people, to ingage them past recall  
In prejudice of *Nero*, and in briefe,  
Perish he must, the fates and I resolve it ;  
Which to effect, I presently will goe,  
Proclame a *Domasine* in *Galbae* name.

*Enter Antonius to him.*

*Anton.* Yonders *Nimpheus* our commander, now,  
I with respect must speake, and smooth my brovv ;  
Captaine all haile.

*Nimp.* *Antonius* well met,  
Your place of *Tribune* in this Anarchy.

*Anton.* This Anarchy my Lord, is *Nero* dead ?

*Nimp.* This Anarchy, this yet unskiled time,  
While *Galba* is unseased of the Empire  
V which *Nero* hath forsooke.

*Anton.* Hath *Nero* then resign'd the Empire ?

*Nimp.* In effect he hath, for he's fled to *Egypt* :

*Anton.* My Lord you tell strange newes to me.

*Nimp.*

The Tragedie of Nero.

*Nymph.* But nothing strange to mee,  
Who every moment knew of his despaires,  
The Curriers came so fast with fresh alarms  
Of new revolts, that hee unable quite  
To beare his feares, which he had long conceal'd,  
Is now revolted from himselfe and fled.

*Anto.* Thrust with reports and rumours from his seate.  
My Lord you know the Caspe depends on you  
As you determine.

*Nymph.* There it lyes *Antonius*,  
What should we doe, it bootes not to relie  
On *Neroes* stinking fortunes, and to sit  
Securely looking on, were to receive  
An Emperour from Spaine; which how disgracefull  
It were to us, who if wee weigh our selves  
The most materiall accessions are  
Of all the Romane Empire, which disgrace  
To cover we must joyne our selves betwix,  
And thereby seeme to have created *Galba*;  
Therefore Ile straight proclaime a *Donative*,  
Of thirty thousand sterlernes a man.

*Anto.* I thinke so great a gift was never heard of,  
*Galba* they say is frugally inclin'd,  
Will he avow so great a gift as this?

*Nymph.* How ere he like of it, he must avow it,  
If by our promise he be once angag'd;  
And since the soldierns care belong to mee,  
I will have care of them, and of their good.  
Let them thanke me, if I through this occasion,  
Procure for them so great a donative. *Exit Nymph.*

*Anto.* So you be, thankt, it skills not who prevale,  
*Galba*, or *Nero*, traitor togham both;  
You give it out that *Nero* fled to *Egypt*,  
Who with the frights of your reports amaz'd,  
By our device, doth lurke for better newes.  
Whiles you inevitably doe betray him,  
Works he all this for *Galba* then? not so,

I have

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

I have long scene his climbing to the Empire  
By secret practises of gracious women,  
And other instruments of the late Court,  
That was his love to her that me refus'd ;  
And now by this hee would give the Souldiers fauor,  
Now is the time to quit *Poppaea* scorne,  
And his riviallity ; I'e straight reveale  
His trecheries, to *Galbae* agened here.

*Exit*

*Enter Tigellinus with the Guard.*

*Tigel.* You see what issue things doe sort unto ;  
Yet may we hope not onely impanitie,  
But with our fellowes part oth' guilt proclaim'd.

*Nero meets them.*

*Nero.* Whither goe you, stay my friends.  
Tis *Cesar* calles you, stay my loving friends.

*Tigel.* We were his slaves, his footstooles, and must crouch ;  
But now, with such obseruance to his fete,  
It is his misery that calles us friends.

*Nero.* And moves you not the misery of a Prince ?  
O stay my friends, hearken to the voyce  
Which once ye knew.

*Tigel.* Hearke to the peoples cryes,  
Hearke to the streets, that *Galba*, *Galba* ring.

*Nero.* The people may forsake me without blame,  
I did them wrong to make you rich, and great,  
I tooke their houses to bestow on you :  
Treason in them hath name of liberty,  
Your fault hath no excuse, you are my fault,  
And the excuse of otherstreacherie.

*Tigel.* Shall we with staying see me his tyrannies  
Tuphold, as if we were in loue with them ?  
We are excus'd unlesse we stay too long,  
As forced Ministers, and a part of wrong.

*Ex. prater Nero.*

*Nero.* O now I see the vizard from my face  
So lovely, and so fearefull is fallen off  
That vizard, shadow, nothing (Maieskic)  
(Which like a child acquainted with his feares,

I

But

## The Tragedie of Nero.

But now men tremble at, and now contemne)  
Nero forsaken is of all the world,  
The world of truth; O fall soone vengeance downe:  
Equall unto their falshoods, and my wrongs;  
Might I accept the Chariot of the Sunne,  
And like another *Phaeton* consume  
In flames of all the world; a pile of Death  
Worthy the state and greatness I have lost.  
Or were I now but Lord of my owne fires,  
Wherin false *Rome* yet once againe might smoake,  
And perish, all unpitied of her Gods,  
That all things in their last destruction might  
Performe a funerall honour to their Lord.  
O *love* dissolve with *Cesar*, *Cesars* world;  
Or you whom *Nero* rather should invoke  
Blacke *Chaos*, and you fearefull shapes beneath,  
That with a long, and not vaine envie have  
Sought to destroy this worke of th'other Gods;  
Now let your darkenes cease the spoiles of day,  
And the worlds first contention end your strife.

*Enter two Romans to him.*

1. *Rom.* Though others bound with greater benefits  
Have left your changed fortunes and doe runne  
Whither new hopes doe call them, yet come we—

*Nero.* O welcome, come you to adverstie,  
Welcome true friends, why there is faith on earth.  
Of thousand servants, friends, and followers;  
Yet two are left: your countenance me thinkes  
Gives comfort, and new hopes.

2. *Rom.* Doe not deceive your thoughts,  
My Lord we bring no comfort, would we could; yet still we come  
But the last duty to performe, and best of all, to saye  
We ever shall, a free death to persuade,  
To cut off hopes of fiercer cruelty,  
And scorne, more cruell to a worthy soule.

1. *Rom.* The Senate have decreed you're punisched  
After the fashion of our ancestors;

Which

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

Which is ; your necke being locked in a forke  
You must be naked whipt, and scourg'd to death.  
*Nero.* The Senate thus decreed ? they that so oft  
My vertues flattered have, and gifts of mine,  
My government prefer'd to ancient times,  
And challenge *Numa* to compare with me ;  
Have they so horrible an end sought out ?  
No, here I beare, which shall prevent such shame,  
This hand shall yet from that deliver me,  
And faithfull be alone unto his Lord.  
Alasse how sharpe, and terrible is death ;  
O must I die, must now my senses close,  
For ever die, and ne're returne againe,  
Never more see the Sunne, nor Heaven, nor Earth ?  
VVhither goe I ? what shall I be anone ;  
What horrid journey wandrest thou my soule,  
Vnder the Earth, in darke, damppe duskie vaults ?  
Or shall I now to nothing be resolv'd ?  
My feares become my hopes, O would I might.  
Me thinkes I see the boyling *Phlegeton*,  
And the dull poole, feared of them we feare,  
The dread and terrorre of the Gods themselves,  
The furies arm'd with linkes, with whippes, with snakes,  
And my owne furies farre more mad then they ;  
My mother, and those troupes of slaughtered friends,  
Aud now the Judge is brought unto the throne,  
That will not leane unto authoritie,  
Nor favour the oppressions of the great.

1. *Rom.* These are the idle terrors of the night,  
Which wise men (though they teach, doe not beleive)  
To curbe our pleasures faine, and aide the weake.

2. *Rom.* Deaths wrongfull defamation, which would make  
Vs shunne this happy haun of our rest,  
This end of evils ; as some fearefull harme.

1. *Rom.* Shadowes and sond imaginations,  
Which now you see on earth ; but children feare.

2. *Rom.* Why should our faults feare punishment from them,

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

What doe the actions of this life concerne  
The tother world, with which is no commerce?

1. *Rom.* Would Heaven and Starres, necessitie compell  
Vs to doe that, which after it would punish?

2. *Rom.* Let us not after our lives end beleevve  
More then you felt before it.

*Nero.* If any words have made me confident,  
And boldly doe, for hearing others speake  
Boldly this night; But will you by example  
Teach me the truth of your opinion,  
And make me see that you beleevue your selues,  
Will you by dying, teach me to beare death  
With courage?

1. *Rom.* No necessitie of death  
Hangs ore our heads, no dangers threatens us,  
Nor Senates sharpe decree, nor *Galbaes* armes.

2. *Rom.* Is this the thankes then thou dost pay our loue?  
Die basely as such a life deseru'd;  
Reserve thy selfe to punishment, and scorne  
Of *Rome*, and of thy laughing enemies.

*Exeunt.*

*Manet Nero.*

*Nero.* They hate me, cause I would but live, what vvas't  
You lov'd kind friends, and came to see my death;  
Let me endure all torture, and reproach  
That Earth, or *Galbaes* anger can inflict:  
Yet hell, and *Rome* wanish are more pitilesse.

*The first Roman to him.*

*Rom.* Though not deseru'd, yet once againe I come  
To warne thee to take pittie on thy selfe;  
The troopes by the Senat sent, descend the hill  
And come.

*Nero.* To take me, and to whip me unto death:  
O whither shall I flie?

*Rom.* Thou hast no choice.

*Nero.* O hither must I fye, hard is his happe,  
Who from death onely must by death escape,  
Where are they yet? O may I not a little  
Bethinke my selfe?

*Rom.*

*The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Rome.* They are at hand ; heare, thou maist heare the noise.

*Nero.* O *Rome* farewell, farevvell you Theaters,  
Where I so oft, with popular applause  
In song and action ; O they come I die. *He falleth on his sword.*  
*Rome.* So base an end all just commiseration,  
Doth take away, yet what we doe nowe spurne,  
The morning Sunne saw fearefull to the world.

*Enter some of Galbaes friends, Antonius and others,  
With Nimpoidius bound.*

*Gal.* You both shall die together, Traitors both,  
He to the common wealth, and thou to him,  
And worse, to a good Prince, what, is he dead ?  
Hath feare encourag'd him, and made him thus,  
Prevent our punishment ; then die with him.  
Fall thy aspiring at thy Masters feet. *He kill Nimpoidius.*

*Anton.* Who thought he justly perisht, yet by thee  
Deseru'd it not, nor ended there thy treason ;  
But even thought o' th Empire, thou conceiv'st  
Galbaes disgrace in receiving that  
Which the sonne of Nimpoidius could hope.

*Rome.* Thus great bad men above them finde a rod :  
People depart, and say there is a God.

*Exeunt.*

*Ff Nf S.*



